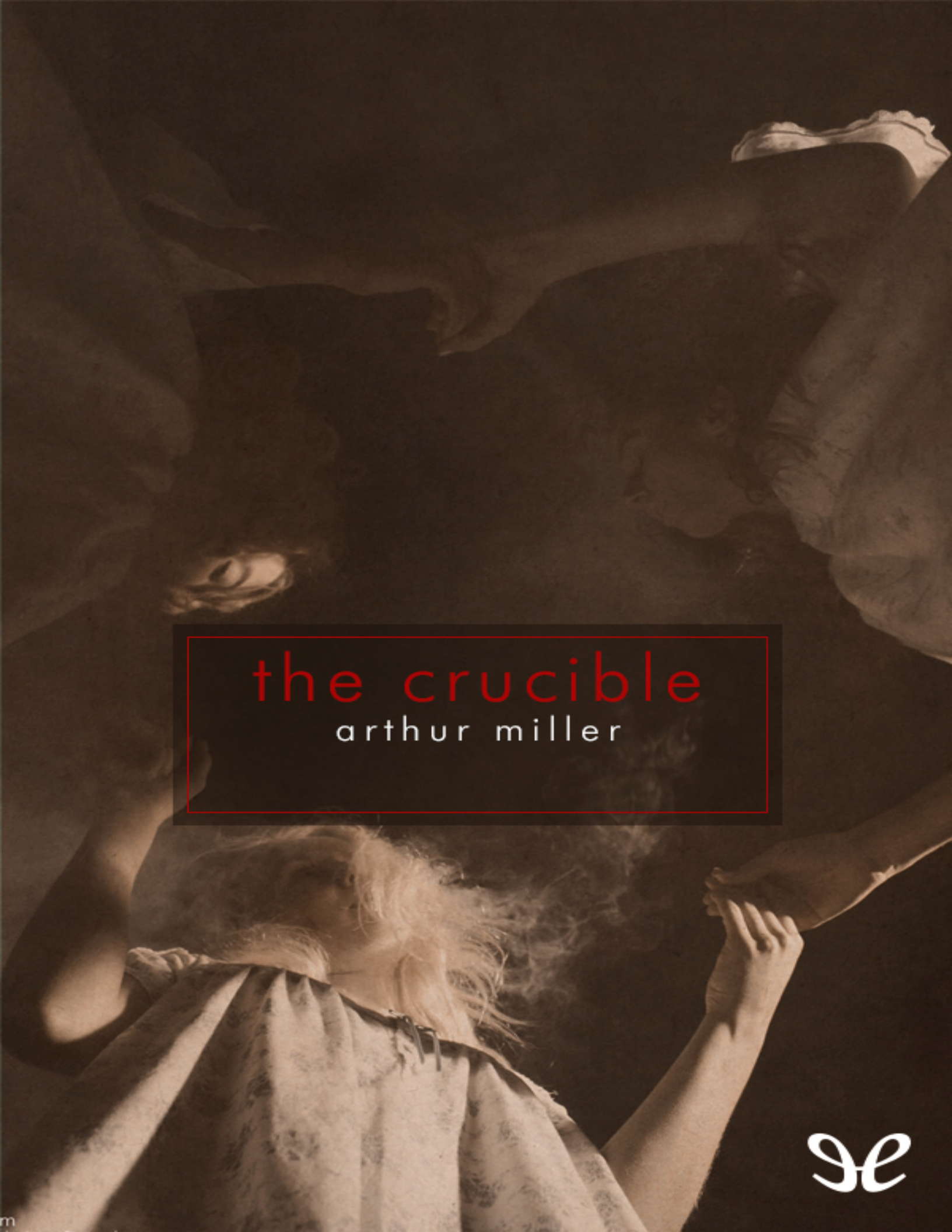
the crucible
arthur miller

From Arthur Miller, America's most celebrated playwright, a searing portrait of a community engulfed by hysteria, inspired by Senator Joseph McCarthy's anti-communist "witch-hunts" in the 1950s

"I believe that the reader will discover here the essential nature of one of the strangest and most awful chapters in human history," Arthur Miller wrote in an introduction to The Crucible, his classic play about the witch-hunts and trials in seventeenth-century Salem, Massachusetts. In the rigid theocracy of Salem, rumors that women are practicing witchcraft galvanize the town's most basic fears and suspicions; and when a young girl accuses Elizabeth Proctor of being a witch, self-righteous church leaders and townspeople insist that Elizabeth be brought to trial. The ruthlessness of the prosecutors and the eagerness of neighbor to testify against neighbor brilliantly illuminate the destructive power of socially sanctioned violence.

Written in 1953, just after Miller received a Pulitzer Prize for Death of a Salesman, The Crucible mirrors the anti-communist hysteria inspired by Senator Joseph McCarthy's "witch-hunts" in the United States. Within the text itself, Miller contemplates the parallels, writing "Political opposition … is given an inhumane overlay, which then justifies the abrogation of all normally applied customs of civilized behavior. A political policy is equated with moral right, and opposition to it with diabolical malevolence."

Arthur Miller

The Crucible

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CHARACTERS
(in order of appearance)

Reverend Samuel Parris

Tituba

Abigail Williams

Susanna Walcott

Ann Putnam

Thomas Putnam

Betty Parris

Mercy Lewis

Mary Warren

John Proctor

Giles Corey

Rebecca Nurse

Reverend John Hale

Elizabeth Proctor

Ezekiel Cheever

George Herrick

Judge John Hathorne

Deputy Governor Thomas Danforth

INTRODUCTION

In 1692 nineteen men and women and two dogs were convicted and hanged for witchcraft in a small village in eastern Massachusetts. By the standards of our own time, if not of that, it was a minor event, a spasm of judicial violence that was concluded within a matter of months. The bodies were buried in shallow graves or not at all, as a further indication that the convicted had not only forfeited participation in the community of man in this life, but in the community of saints in the next. Just how shallow those graves were, however, is evident from the fact that the people buried there were not eradicated from history: their names remain with us to this day, not least because of Arthur Miller, for whom past events and present realities have always been pressed together by a moral logic. In his hands the ghosts of those who died have proved real enough even if the witches they were presumed to be were little more than fantasies conjured by a mixture of fear, ambition, frustration, jealousy, and perverted pride.

In 1957 the Massachusetts General Court passed a resolution stating that "No disgrace or cause for distress" attached itself to the descendants of those indicted, tried, and sentenced. Declaring the proceedings to be "the result of popular hysterical fear of the Devil," the resolution noted that "more civilized laws" had superseded those under which the accused had been tried. It did not, however, include by name all those who had suffered, and it was not until 1992 that the omissions were rectified in a further resolution of the court. It had taken exactly three hundred years for the state to acknowledge its responsibility for all those who died.

This was the long-delayed end of a story whose beginnings lay in the woods that surrounded the village of Salem when, in 1692, a number of

young girls were discovered, with a West Indian slave called Tituba, dancing and playing at conjuring. To deflect punishment from themselves they accused others, and those who listened, themselves insecure in their authority, acquiesced, partly because it served their interests to do so and partly because they inhabited a world in which witchcraft formed a part of their cosmology. Their universe was absolute, lacking in ambivalence. There was only one text to consult, and that text reserved only one fate for witches.

Why should it have taken so long to acknowledge error? More significantly, why offer apology at all for an event so long in the past? Perhaps because the needs of justice and the necessity for sustaining the authority of the court have not always been coincident and because there will always be those who defend the latter, believing that by doing so they sustain the possibility of the former. Perhaps because there are those who believe that authority is all of a piece and that to challenge it anywhere is to threaten it everywhere.

It was not the first such apology. In 1711 the governor of Massachusetts, acting on behalf of the general court of the province, set his hand to a reversal of attainder that offered restitution for this miscarriage of justice. In particular he granted one hundred and fifty pounds damages to John and Elizabeth Proctor. Elizabeth had survived, by virtue of the child she carried. Her husband was not so lucky; he was executed on August 19, 1692. His accusers were young girls, barely on the verge of puberty. Perversely, damages were paid not only to the victims but also to such people as William Good, who was his wife's accuser, and Abigail Hobbs, a "confessed witch" who became a hostile witness. The affair, it seemed, was to be treated as a general calamity from which all suffered and in which the state was essentially innocent. Indeed the incident was ascribed to "The Influence and Energy of the Evil Spirits so great at that time," a time that, despite the declared purpose of the document, was described as being "Infested with a horrible Witchcraft."

Arthur Miller first encountered the story of Salem and its witches while a student at the University of Michigan. It stayed in his mind, but only as

one of those mysterious incidents from a past separated from us by more than time: “It never occurred to me that I would ever deal with it … because I had never formulated an aesthetic idea of this tragedy.” Then, in 1949, he came upon a new book about the trials, by Marion Starkey, called *The Devil in Massachusetts.*

Not the least fascinating aspect of the book lay in the fact that the author recognized the dramatic potential of the events. Claiming to have tried to “uncover the classic dramatic form of the story itself” Starkey insisted that “here is real Greek tragedy,” with “a beginning, a middle and an end.” Interestingly, in the notebook Arthur Miller started at this time, he noted that “It must be ‘tragic’” and, when *The Crucible* opened in New York, in 1953, he remarked, “Salem is one of the few dramas in history with a beginning, a middle and an end.”

Starkey recognized, too, a truth that has always lain at the center of Miller’s own approach to theater and the public world it shadows:

> The human reality of what happens to millions is only for God to grasp; but what happens to individuals is another matter and within the range of mortal understanding. The Salem story has the virtue of being a highly individualized affair. Witches in the abstract were not hanged in Salem; but one by one were brought to the gallows such diverse personalities as a decent grandmother grown too hard of hearing to understand a crucial question from the jurors, a rakish, pipe-smoking female tramp, a plain farmer who thought only to save his wife from molestation, a lame old man whose toothless gums did not deny expression to a very salty vocabulary … And after you have studied their lives faithfully, a remarkable thing happens; you discover that if you really know the few, you are on your way to understanding the millions. By grasping the local, the parochial even, it is possible to make a beginning at understanding the universal.

Starkey also acknowledged the wider implications of Salem, implications Miller would choose to amplify. For the witch hunt was scarcely a product only of the distant past. “It has been revived,” Starkey insisted, “on a colossal scale by replacing the medieval idea of malefic witchcraft by a pseudo-scientific concept like ‘race,’ ‘nationality’ and by substituting for theological dissension a whole complex of warring ideologies. Accordingly the story of 1692 is of far more than antiquarian interest; it is an allegory of our times.”

It was as an allegory of our times that Miller seized upon it, and though it was to be the McCarthyite witch-hunts of the House Un-American Activities Committee that seemed to offer the most direct parallel, he, like Starkey, recognized other parallels, in a war then only four years behind them, for the Nazis, too, had their demons and deployed a systematic pseudo-science to identify those they regarded as tainted and impure.

But for the moment it was the domestic danger that commanded Miller’s imagination. It was “the maturation of the hysteria at the time which pulled the trigger; without the latter I’d never have launched.” As he remarked at the time, to his friend and colleague Elia Kazan, director of *All My Sons* and *Death of a Salesman,* the Salem trials offered a persuasive parallel: “It’s all here … every scene.” And certainly Miller’s own account suggests that what had once struck him as an impenetrable mystery had now begun to make psychological and social sense. As he has explained in his autobiography,

> At first I rejected the idea of a play on the subject … But gradually, over weeks, a living connection between myself and Salem, and between Salem and Washington, was made in my mind—for whatever else they might be, I saw that the hearings in Washington were profoundly and even avowedly ritualistic. … The main point of the hearings, precisely as in seventeenth-century Salem, was that the accused make public confession, damn his confederates as well as his Devil master, and guarantee his sterling new allegiance by breaking disgusting old vows-whereupon he was let loose to rejoin

> the society of extremely decent people. In other words, the same spiritual nugget lay folded within both procedures-an act of contrition done not in solemn privacy but out in the public air.

Molly Kazan objected, feeling that the parallel was a false one, since witches manifestly did not exist, but Communists did. It was an objection later echoed by others, but not one accepted by Miller. For, as he has pointed out, not only was Tituba in all probability practicing voodoo on that night in 1692, but witchcraft was accepted as a fact by virtually every secular and religious authority. To that end he quotes the eighteenth-century British jurist Sir William Blackstone as insisting that it "is a truth to which every nation in the world hath in its turn borne testimony," and John Wesley, founder of Methodism, as stating, "The giving up of witchcraft is, in effect, giving up the Bible." Indeed, by the end of the seventeenth century an estimated two hundred thousand people worldwide had been executed as witches. The question is not the reality of witches but the power of authority to define the nature of the real, and the desire, on the part of individuals and the state, to identify those whose purging will relieve a sense of anxiety and guilt. What lay behind the procedures of both witch trial and political hearing was a familiar American need to assert a recoverable innocence even if the only guarantee of such innocence lay in the displacement of guilt onto others. To sustain the integrity of their own names, the accused were invited to offer the names of others, even though to do so would be to make them complicit in procedures they despised and hence to damage their sense of themselves. And here is the root of a theme that connects virtually all of Miller's plays: betrayal, of the self no less than of others.

Nor was the parallel a product of Miller's fanciful imagination. In 1948 Congressman George A. Dondero, in the House debate on the Mundt-Nixon bill, to "protect the United States against Un-American and subversive activities," observed that "the world is dividing into two camps, freedom versus Communism, Christian civilization versus paganism." More directly Judge Irving Kaufman, who presided over the Rosenberg espionage trial in

1951, accused those before him of “diabolical conspiracy” and “denial of God.” Interestingly, on the night the Rosenbergs were executed, the cast and audience of *The Crucible* stood in silence as a gesture of respect.

The past had attractions for Miller because a rational analysis and dramatic presentation of the political realities of early-fifties America presented problems. He has said,

> The reason I think that I moved in that direction was that it was simply impossible any longer to discuss what was happening to us in contemporary terms. There had to be some distance, given the phenomena. We were all going slightly crazy trying to be honest and trying to see straight and trying to be safe. Sometimes there are conflicts in these three urges. I had known this story since my college years and I’d never understood why it was so attractive to me. Now it suddenly made sense. It seemed to me that the hysteria in Salem had a certain inner procedure or several which we were duplicating once again, and that perhaps by revealing the nature of that procedure some light could be thrown on what we were doing to ourselves. And that’s how that play came to be.

The hostility of the Kazans toward the project came from Elia Kazan’s decision to be a cooperative witness before the Committee and thus to identify by name those who, in his judgment, had been members of the Communist party in the 1930s. By a strange irony Miller was returning from Salem, where he had been researching the play, when he heard on his car radio news of Kazan’s testimony before the Committee. Kazan had offered names: Harry Elion, John Bonn, Alice Evans, Anne Howe. He was the first of a number of Miller’s colleagues and friends to capitulate to the Committee’s demands and blandishments. The following month Miller’s role model, the radical playwright Clifford Odets, also named names; in June of the following year, six months after *The Crucible* opened, so did Lee J. Cobb, who originated the role of Willy Loman on Broadway. They

did so partly out of fear for their careers—uncooperative witnesses would almost inevitably find themselves dismissed from their jobs-and partly because they genuinely felt guilty about the naïveté of their earlier commitments. The Committee thus offered what religion offers: the opportunity for confession and the grace of redemption.

The irony lay not only in the fact that in doing so they replicated the processes of the 1692 trials, where the children cried out against Sarah Good, Bridget Bishop, George Jacobs, Martha Bellows, Alice Barrow, but that in Miller's plays there usually comes a moment when the central character cries out his own name, determined to invest it with meaning and integrity. Almost invariably this moment occurs when he is on the point of betraying himself and others. A climactic scene in *The Crucible* comes when John Proctor, on the point of trading his integrity for his life, finally refuses to pay the price, which is to offer the names of others to buy his life. "I like not to spoil their names. … I speak my own sins; I cannot judge another. I have no tongue for it." He thus recovers his own name by refusing to name others: " … now I do think I see some shred of goodness in John Proctor." Three years later, Miller himself was called before the Committee. His reply, when asked to betray others, was a virtual paraphrase of the one offered by Proctor. He announced, "I am trying to, and I will, protect my sense of myself. I could not use the name of another person and bring trouble on him." Asked to comment on this, thirty years later, he replied, "Well, there's only one thing to say to them. You don't have much choice."

Salem in 1692 was in turmoil. The Royal Charter had been revoked. Original land titles had been canceled and others not yet secured. Neighbor accordingly looked on neighbor with some suspicion, for fear that land might be reassigned. It was also a community riven with schisms, which centered on the person of the Reverend Parris, whose materialism and self-concern were more than many could stomach, including a landowner and inn-keeper called John Proctor.

Miller observed in his notebook, “It is Shakespearean. Parties and counter-parties. There must be a counter-party. Proctor and others.” John Proctor quickly emerged as the center of the story Miller wished to tell, though not of the trials, where he was one among many. But to Miller, as he wrote in the notebook, *“It has got to be basically Proctor’s story.* The important thing-the process whereby a man, feeling guilt for A, sees himself as guilty of B and thus belies himself,—accommodates his credo to believe in what he knows is not true.” Before this could become a tragedy for the community it had to be a tragedy for an individual : “A difficulty. This hanging must be ‘tragic‘-i.e. must [be] result of an opportunity not grasped when it should have been, due to ‘flaw.’ ”

That flaw, as so often in Miller’s work, was to be sexual, not least because there seemed a sexual flavor to the language of those who confessed to possession by the devil and who were accused of dancing naked in a community in which both dancing and nakedness were themselves seen as signs of corruption. But that hardly seemed possible when Abigail Williams and John Proctor, who were to become the central characters in Miller’s drama, were eleven and sixty, respectively. Accordingly, at Miller’s bidding she becomes seventeen and he thirty-five, and so they begin to move toward each other, the gap narrowing until a sexual flame is lit. Elizabeth Proctor, who had managed an inn, now becomes a solitary farmer’s wife, cut off from communion not only with her errant husband, who has strayed from her side, but also in some degree from the society of Salem.

Other changes are made. Giles Corey, a cantankerous old man who carelessly damns his wife by commenting on her fondness for books, was killed, pressed to death by stones, on September 19, 1692, a month after Proctor’s death. Miller brings that death forward so that it can prove exemplary. By the same token John Hale’s growing conversion to skepticism did not come to its climax with Proctor’s death, but only later, when his own wife was accused. The event is advanced in order to keep Proctor as the focus. At the same time the playwright resisted an aspect of the story that would have damaged the parallel to fifties America, though it

would have struck a chord with people in many other countries who were later to seize on *The Crucible* as an account of their own situation. For the fact is that John Proctor's son was tortured. Proctor wrote in a petition, "My son William Proctor, when he was examin'd, because he would not confess that he was Guilty, when he was Innocent, they tied him Neck and Heels till the Blood gushed out of his Nose." The effect on the play of including this detail would have been to transform Proctor's motivation and diminish the significance of the sexual guilt that disables him.

Historically, John Proctor did not immediately intervene on learning of the trials and does not do so in the play. The historical account offers no explanation. In the notebooks Miller searched for one: "Proctor—guilt stays his hand (against what action?)." The guilt derives from his adultery; the action becomes his decision to expose Abigail.

In his original plan Miller toyed with making Proctor a leader of the anti-Parris faction, who backtracks on that role and equivocates in his dealings with Hale. He toyed, too, with the notion that Proctor should half wish his wife dead. He abandoned both ideas. If Proctor emerges as a leader, it is inadvertently as he fights to defend the wife he has wronged and whose life he has placed in jeopardy because of his affair with Abigail.

What is at stake in The *Crucible* is the survival of Salem-which is to say, the survival of a sense of community. On a literal level the village ceased to operate. The trials took precedence over all other activities. They took the farmer from his field and his wife from the milk shed. In the screenplay for the film version Miller has the camera observe the depredations of the countryside: unharvested crops, untended animals, houses in disrepair. But, more fundamentally than this, Miller is concerned with the breaking of the social contract that binds a community together, as love and mutual respect bind individuals. What took him to Salem was not, finally, an obsession with McCarthyism nor even a concern with a bizarre and, at the time, obscure historical incident, but a fascination with "the most common experience of humanity, the shifts of interest that turned loving husbands and wives into stony enemies, loving parents into indifferent supervisors or even exploiters of their children … what they called the

breaking of charity with one another." There was evidence for all of these in seventeenth-century Salem but, as Miller implies, the breaking of charity was scarcely restricted to a small New England settlement in a time distant from our own. For him the parallel between Salem in 1692 and America in 1953 was clear:

> People were being torn apart, their loyalty to one another crushed and … common human decency was going down the drain. It's indescribable, really, because you'd get the feeling that nothing was going to be sacred anymore. The situations were so exact it was quite amazing. The ritual was the same. What they were demanding of Proctor was that he expose this conspiracy of witches whose aim was to bring down the rule of the Church, of Christianity. If he gave them a couple of names he could go home. And if he didn't he was going to hang for it. It was quite the same excepting we weren't hanged, but the ritual was exactly the same. You told them anyone you knew had been a left-winger or a Communist and you went home. But I wasn't going to do that.

Neither was John Proctor.

One dictionary definition of a crucible is a place of extreme heat, "a severe test." John Proctor and the others summoned before the court in Salem discovered the meaning of that. Yet such tests, less formal, less judicial, less public, are the small change of daily life. Betrayal, denial, rash judgment, self-justification are remote neither in time nor place.

The Crucible, then, is not finally concerned with reanimating history or even merely with implying contemporary analogies for past crimes. It is Arthur Miller's most frequently produced play not, I think, because it addresses affairs of state nor even because it offers us the tragic sight of a man who dies to save his conception of himself and the world, but because audiences understand all too well that the breaking of charity is no less a truth of their own lives than it is an account of historical process.

There is, thus, more than one mystery here. Beyond the question of witchcraft lies the more fundamental question of human nature, for which betrayal seems an ever-present possibility. *The Crucible* reminds us how fragile is our grasp on those shared values that are the foundation of any society. It is a play written not only at a time when America seemed to sanction the abandonment of the normal decencies and legalities of civilized life but in the shadow of a still greater darkness, for Miller has acknowledged that the fact of the Holocaust was in his mind, as it had been in the mind of Marion Starkey.

What replaces the sense of natural community in *The Crucible,* as perhaps in Nazi Germany and, on a different scale, 1950s America, is a sense of participating in a ritual, of conformity to a ruling orthodoxy and hence a hostility to those who threaten it. The purity of one's religious principles is confirmed by collaborating, at least by proxy, in the punishment of those who reject them. Racial identity is reinforced by eliminating those who might "contaminate" it, as one's Americanness is underscored by identifying those who could be said to be un-American. In the film version of his play, Miller, free now to expand and deepen the social context of the drama, chose to emphasize the illusory sense of community: "The CROWD's urging rises to angry crescendo. HANGMAN pulls a crude lever and the trap drops and the two fall. THE CROWD is delirious with joyful, gratifying unity."

Alexis de Tocqueville identified the pressure toward conformity even in the early years of the Republic. It was a pressure acknowledged equally by Hawthorne, Melville, Emerson, and Thoreau. When Sinclair Lewis's Babbitt abandons his momentary rebellion to return to his conformist society, he is described as being "almost tearful with joy." Miller's alarm, then, is not his alone, nor is his sense of the potentially tyrannical power of shared myths that appear to offer absolution to those who accept them. If his faith in individual conscience as a corrective is also not unique, it is, perhaps, harder to sustain in the second half of a century that has seen collective myths exercising a coercive power, in America and Europe.

Beyond anything else *The Crucible* is a study in power and the mechanisms by which power is sustained, challenged, and lost. Perhaps that is one reason why, as Miller has noted, productions of the play seem to precede and follow revolutions and why what can be seen as a revolt of the young against the old was, on the production of *The Crucible* in Communist China, perceived as a comment on the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s, in which the Young Guard humiliated, tortured, and even killed those who had previously been in authority over them: parents, teachers, members of the cultural elite. In the landscape of *The Crucible,* on the one hand stands the church, which provides the defining language within which all social, political, and moral debate is conducted. On the other stand those usually deprived of power—the black slave Tituba and the young children—who suddenly gain access to an authority as absolute as that which had previously subordinated them. Those ignored by history become its motor force. Those socially marginalized move to the very center of social action. Those whose opinions and perceptions carried neither personal nor political weight suddenly acquire an authority so absolute that they come to feel they can challenge even the representatives of the state. As Miller observes, in a note to the unpublished filmscript, Tituba "has the feel of a power she has never known in her life." To be a young girl in Salem was to have no role but obedience, no function but unquestioning faith, no freedom except a willingness to submit to those with power over her life. Sexuality was proscribed, the imagination distrusted, emotions focused solely on the stirring of the spirit. Rebellion, when it came, was thus likely to take as its target first those with least access to power, then those for whom virtue alone was insufficient protection. Next would come those who were regarded as politically vulnerable and finally those who possessed real power. Predictably it was at this final stage that the conspiracy collapsed, just as Senator McCarthy was to thrive on those who possessed no real purchase on the political system and to lose his credibility when he chose to challenge the U.S. Army. The first three witches named were a slave, a laborer's wife who had become little more than a tramp, and a woman who had absented herself from church and reportedly lived in sin.

The Crucible is a play about the seductive nature of power and that seductiveness is perhaps not unconnected with a confused sexuality. The judges were people who chose not to inquire into their own motives. They submitted to the irrational with a kind of perverse pleasure, a pleasure not entirely drained of sexual content. They dealt, after all, with exposure, with stripping souls bare, with provoking and hearing confessions of an erotic forthrightness that no other occasion or circumstances would permit. They saw young women cry out in a kind of orgasmic ecstasy. They witnessed men and women of position, intelligence, and property rendered into their power by the confessions of those who recalled abuses and assaults, revealed to them only in a religiously and therapeutically charged atmosphere. These were the "recovered memories" of Puritan New England, and the irrational nature of the accusations, their sexual frisson, the lack of any proof beyond "spectral evidence" (the dreams and visions of the accusers) were a part of their lubricious attraction. When Mary Warren accuses a woman, she says, "I never knew it before … and all at once I remembered everything she done to me!" In our own time we are not so remote from this phenomenon as to render it wholly strange. Men and women with no previous memory of assaults, which were apparently barbaric and even demonic, suddenly recall such abuse, more especially when assisted to do so by therapists, social workers, or religionists who offer themselves as experts in the spectral world of suppressed memories. Such abuse, recalled in later life, is impossible to verify, but the accusations alone have sufficed to destroy entire families. To deny reality to such abuse is itself seen as a dangerous perversion, just as to deny witchcraft was seen as diabolic in Puritan New England.

Did the young girls in Salem, then, see no witches ? Were they motivated solely by self-concern or, in Abigail's case, a blend of vengeance and desire? *The Crucible* is not concerned to arbitrate. Tituba plainly does dabble in the black arts, while Mrs. Putnam is quite prepared to do so. Abigail seems a more straightforward case. Jealous of Elizabeth Proctor, she sees a way of removing her and marrying John. In Miller's screenplay,

however, Abigail has a vision of Elizabeth's spirit visiting her in her bedroom:

> INT NIGHT ABIGAIL BEDROOM
> *She is asleep in bed. She stirs, then suddenly sits up and sees, seated*
> *in a nearby chair, a WOMAN with her back to her. ABIGAIL*
> *slides out of bed and approaches the woman, comes around to see*
> *her face-it is ELIZABETH PROCTOR.*
> ABIGAIL: Elizabeth? I am with God! In Jesus' name begone back to Hell!
> *ELIZABETH'S FACE is transformed into that of* a *HAWK, its beak opening. ABIGAIL steps back in terror.*

Whatever her motives, she plainly sees this phantom even though it is conjured not from the devil but from guilt and desire, which in Puritan New England were seen as synonymous. In the screen version Abigail is described as "Certain now that she's mad." This takes us beyond the portrait we are offered by the play, where she is presented as more clearly calculating, but the essential point is not the nature of her motivation nor even the substantiality or otherwise of witches, but the nature of the real and the manner in which it is determined. Proctor and the others find themselves in court because they deny a reality to which others subscribe and in which, whatever their motives, they in part believe, until, slowly, skepticism begins to infect them with the virus of another reality.

It is the essence of power that it accrues to those with the ability to determine the nature of the real. They authorize the language, the grammar, the vocabulary within which others must live their lives. Miller observed in his notebook, "Very important. To say 'There be no witches' is to invite charge of trying to conceal the conspiracy and to discredit the highest authorities who alone can save the community!" Proctor and his wife try to

step outside the authorized text. They will acknowledge only those things of which they have immediate knowledge. “I have wondered if there be witches in the world,” observes John Proctor, incautiously, adding, “I have no knowledge of it,” as his wife, too, insists: “I cannot believe it.” When Proctor asserts his right to freedom of thought and speech—“I may speak my heart, I think”—he is reminded that this had been the sin of the Quakers, and Quakers of course had learned the limits of free speech and faith at the end of a hangman’s noose on Boston Common.

There is a court that John and Elizabeth Proctor fear. It is one, moreover, which if it has no power to sentence them to death does nonetheless command their lives. Proctor says to his wife, “I come into a court when I come into this house!” Elizabeth, significantly, replies, “The magistrate sits in your heart that judges you.” Court and magistrate are simply synonyms for guilt. The challenge for John Proctor is to transform guilt into conscience and responsibility. Guilt renders him powerless, as it had Willy Loman in *Death of* a *Salesman;* individual conscience restores personal integrity and identity, and places him at the center of social action. Miller has remarked of Proctor, “I suppose I had been searching a long time for a tragic hero, and now I had him; the Salem story was not going to be abandoned. The longer I worked the more certain I felt that improbable as it might seem, there were moments when an individual conscience was all that could keep the world from falling apart.”

Despite the suspicions of his judges, though, Proctor does not offer himself as social rebel. If he seeks to overthrow the court, it is apparently for one reason only: to save his wife. But behind that there is another motive: to save not himself but his sense of himself. In common with so many other Miller protagonists, he is forced to ask the meaning of his own life. As Tom Wilkinson, who played the part of Proctor in a National Theatre production, has said, “It is rare for people to be asked the question which puts them squarely in front of themselves.” But that is the question asked of John Proctor and that, incidentally, was asked of Miller in writing the play and later in appearing before HUAC.

Miller seems to have written the play in a kind of white heat. The enthusiasm and speed with which he went to Salem underline the urgency with which he regarded the project, as did his later comment, on returning from Salem, that he felt a kind of social responsibility to see it through to production. His achievement was to control and contain that anger without denying it. Linguistically he achieved that by writing the play first in verse. Dramatically he accomplished it by using the structured formality of the court hearings, albeit hearings penetrated by the partly hysterical, partly calculated interventions of the accusing girls.

Much of the achievement of *The Crucible* lies in his creation of a language that makes the seventeenth century both distant and close, which enables his characters to discover within the limiting vocabulary and grammar of faith turned dogma a means to express their own lives. For the British dramatist John Arden, who first encountered the play at a time when his own attempts at historical writing had, in his own words, proved "embarrassingly bad," it "showed me how it could be done." In particular, "It was not just the monosyllabic Anglo-Saxon strength of the words chosen so much as the rhythms that impregnated the speeches," that and "the *sounds* of the seventeenth century, not tediously imitated, but … imaginatively reconstructed to shake hands with the sounds and speech patterns of the twentieth." The language of *The Crucible* is not authentic in the sense of reproducing archaisms or reconstructing a seventeenth-century lexis. It is authentic in that it makes fully believable the words of those who speak out of a different time and place but whose human dilemmas are recognizably our own.

Proctor and his judges were articulate people, even if they were fluent in different languages: he, in that of a common-sense practicality, they in that of a bureaucratic theocracy. He believed what he saw and finally accepted responsibility for his actions. They believed in a shadow world in which visions were substantial and the observable world no more than a delusion. They saw themselves as the agents of an abstract justice and hence freed of personal responsibility. These figures speak to one another across an unbridgeable divide, and that gulf is the flaw that fractures their community.

But there is never any sense that those involved in this social and psychological dance of death are rhetoricians, pushing words forward in place of emotions. There may have come a time when the judges ceased defending the faith and began defending themselves, but there is a passion behind their calculation, albeit the passion of those who sacrifice humanity for what they see as an ideal. In that they hardly differ from any other zealot whose hold on the truth depends on a belief that truth must be singular.

The Crucible is both an intense psychological drama and a play of epic proportions. Its cast is larger than that of almost any of Miller's plays until *The American Clock* (1980), because this is a drama about an entire community betrayed by a Dionysian surrender to the irrational; it is also, however, a play about the redemption of an individual and, through the individual, of a society. Some scenes, therefore, people the stage with characters, while others show the individual confronted by little more than his own conscience. That oscillation between the public and the private is a part of the rhythmic pattern of the play.

Miller was not unaware of the danger of offering the public such a play in 1953 and thereby "writing myself into the wilderness politically but personally as well." He knew that his refusal to name names in 1956 would be to invite charges of being unpatriotic. Indeed, appearing before the House Un-American Activities Committee, he was stung into insisting on his patriotism while defending his right to challenge the direction of American policy and thought: "It is not for me to make easy answers and to come forth before the American people and tell them everything is all right, when I look in their eyes and see them troubled … my criticism, such as it has been, is not to be confused with a hatred. I love this country, I think as much as any man, and it is because I see things that I think traduce certainly the values that have been in this country that I speak." The result was much as he had anticipated. *The Crucible* ran for only 197 performances (compared with 742 for *Death of* a *Salesman)* and was sustained on Broadway only by virtue of the cast's accepting a pay cut. Miller's next *play, A View from the Bridge,* ran for 149 performances, and for the following nine years no new play by Miller appeared on the American

stage, though he did write the screenplay for *The Misfits.* He was, meanwhile, cited for contempt of Congress, and received a fine and prison sentence, subsequently quashed on appeal. He later explained, "I was just out of sync with the whole country … I simply couldn't find a way into the country anymore … I had a sense that the time had gotten away from me." He found himself increasingly ostracized, but he recognized in that sense of isolation not only a fate he shared with others called before the Committee but one that the French writer Alexis de Tocqueville had identified well over a century earlier when he observed,

> In America the majority raises formidable barriers around the liberty of opinion; within those barriers a man may write what he pleases, but woe to him if he goes beyond them. Not that he is in danger of auto-da-fé, but he is exposed to continual obloquy and persecution … Every sort of compensation, even that of celebrity, is refused to him. Before making public his opinions, he thought he had sympathizers; now it seems to him that he has none any more since he has revealed himself to everyone; then those who blame him criticize him loudly and those who think as he does keep quiet and move away without courage. He yields at length, overcome by the daily effort which he has to make, and subsides into silence, as if he felt remorse for having spoken the truth.

It was a passage that Miller knew and later quoted in recalling the mood of this period. Yet in the end it was clear that if Miller was out of sync it was because he marched to a different drummer, and in time others came to hear the same beat. The House Un-American Activities Committee lost all credibility, the Red Scare passed, and if the accusers did not stand in a church, as Ann Putnam did in 1706, and listen as the minister read out her public apology and confession ("As I was the instrument of accusing Goodwife Nurse and her two sisters, I desire to lie in the dust and be humbled for it … I desire to … earnestly beg forgiveness of all those unto

whom I have given just cause of sorrow and offence, whose relations were taken away and accused"), they quickly lost their power and influence. Nor did Arthur Miller remain silent for long.

Today, compilers of program notes feel as great a need to explain the history of Senator McCarthy and the House Un-American Activities Committee as they do the events of seventeenth-century Salem. In fact, the play's success now owes little to the political and social context in which it was written. It stands, instead, as a study of the debilitating power of guilt, the seductions of power, the flawed nature of the individual and of the society to which the individual owes allegiance. It stands as testimony to the ease with which we betray those very values essential to our survival, but also the courage with which some men and women can challenge what seems to be a ruling orthodoxy.

In Salem, Massachusetts, there was to be a single text, a single language, a single reality. Authority invoked demons from whose grasp it offered to liberate its citizens if they would only surrender their consciences to others and acquiesce in the silencing of those who appeared to threaten order. But *The Crucible* is full of other texts. At great danger to themselves, men and women put their names to depositions, signed testimonials, wrote appeals. There was, it appeared, another language, less absolute, more compassionate. There were those who proposed a reality that differed from the one offered to them by the state, nor would these signatories deny themselves by denying their fellow citizens. There have been many more such since the 1690s, many more, too, since the 1950s, who have done no less. But *The Crucible* is not to be taken as merely a celebration of the resister, of the individual who refuses incorporation, for John Proctor had denied himself and others long before Tituba and a group of young girls ventured into the forest that fringed the village of Salem.

Like so many of Miller's other plays, it is a study of a man who wishes, above all, to believe that he has invested his life with meaning, but cannot do so if he betrays himself through betraying others. It is a study of a society that believes in its unique virtues and seeks to sustain that dream of perfection by denying all possibility of its imperfection. Evil can only be

external, for theirs is a city on a hill. John Proctor's flaw is his failure, until the last moment, to distinguish guilt from responsibility; America's is to believe that it is at the same time both guilty and without flaw.

In 1991, at Salem, Arthur Miller unveiled the winning design for a monument to those who had died. It was dedicated the following year by the Nobel laureate Elie Wiesel. Three hundred years had passed. The final act, it seemed, has been concluded. However, not only do accused witches still die, in more than one country in the world, but groundless accusations are still granted credence, hysteria still claims its victims, persecution still masquerades as virtue and prejudice as piety. Nor has the need to resist coercive myths or to assert moral truths passed with such a final act of absolution. The witch-finder is ever vigilant, and who would not rather direct his attention to others than stand, in the heat of the day, and challenge his authority?

ACT ONE (AN OVERTURE)

A small upper bedroom in the home of Reverend Samuel Parris, Salem, Massachusetts, in the spring of the year 1692.
There is a narrow window at the left. Through its leaded panes the morning sunlight streams. A candle still burns near the bed, which is at the right. A chest, a chair, and a small table are the other furnishings. At the back a door opens on the landing of the stairway to the ground floor. The room gives off an air of clean spareness. The roof rafters are exposed, and the wood colors are raw and unmellowed.
As the curtain rises, Reverend Parris is discovered kneeling beside the bed, evidently in prayer. His daughter, Betty Parris, aged ten, is lying on the bed, inert.

At the time of these events Parris was in his middle forties. In history he cut a villainous path, and there is very little good to be said for him. He believed he was being persecuted wherever he went, despite his best efforts to win people and God to his side. In meeting, he felt insulted if someone rose to shut the door without first asking his permission. He was a widower with no interest in children, or talent with them. He regarded them as young adults, and until this strange crisis he, like the rest of Salem, never conceived that the children were anything but thankful for being permitted to walk straight, eyes slightly lowered, arms at the sides, and mouths shut until bidden to speak.

His house stood in the "town"—but we today would hardly call it a village. The meeting house was nearby, and from this point outward—toward the bay or inland—there were a few small-windowed, dark houses

snuggling against the raw Massachusetts winter. Salem had been established hardly forty years before. To the European world the whole province was a barbaric frontier inhabited by a sect of fanatics who, nevertheless, were shipping out products of slowly increasing quantity and value.

No one can really know what their lives were like. They had no novelists-and would not have permitted anyone to read a novel if one were handy. Their creed forbade anything resembling a theater or "vain enjoyment." They did not celebrate Christmas, and a holiday from work meant only that they must concentrate even more upon prayer.

Which is not to say that nothing broke into this strict and somber way of life. When a new farmhouse was built, friends assembled to "raise the roof," and there would be special foods cooked and probably some potent cider passed around. There was a good supply of ne'er-do-wells in Salem, who dallied at the shovelboard in Bridget Bishop's tavern. Probably more than the creed, hard work kept the morals of the place from spoiling, for the people were forced to fight the land like heroes for every grain of corn, and no man had very much time for fooling around.

That there were some jokers, however, is indicated by the practice of appointing a two-man patrol whose duty was to "walk forth in the time of God's worship to take notice of such as either lye about the meeting house, without attending to the word and ordinances, or that lye at home or in the fields without giving good account thereof, and to take the names of such persons, and to present them to the magistrates, whereby they may be accordingly proceeded against." This predilection for minding other people's business was time-honored among the people of Salem, and it undoubtedly created many of the suspicions which were to feed the coming madness. It was also, in my opinion, one of the things that a John Proctor would rebel against, for the time of the armed camp had almost passed, and since the country was reasonably—although not wholly—safe, the old disciplines were beginning to rankle. But, as in all such matters, the issue was not clear-cut, for danger was still a possibility, and in unity still lay the best promise of safety.

The edge of the wilderness was close by. The American continent stretched endlessly west, and it was full of mystery for them. It stood, dark and threatening, over their shoulders night and day, for out of it Indian tribes marauded from time to time, and Reverend Parris had parishioners who had lost relatives to these heathen.

The parochial snobbery of these people was partly responsible for their failure to convert the Indians. Probably they also preferred to take land from heathens rather than from fellow Christians. At any rate, very few Indians were converted, and the Salem folk believed that the virgin forest was the Devil's last preserve, his home base and the citadel of his final stand. To the best of their knowledge the American forest was the last place on earth that was not paying homage to God.

For these reasons, among others, they carried about an air of innate resistance, even of persecution. Their fathers had, of course, been persecuted in England. So now they and their church found it necessary to deny any other sect its freedom, lest their New Jerusalem be defiled and corrupted by wrong ways and deceitful ideas.

They believed, in short, that they held in their steady hands the candle that would light the world. We have inherited this belief, and it has helped and hurt us. It helped them with the discipline it gave them. They were a dedicated folk, by and large, and they had to be to survive the life they had chosen or been born into in this country.

The proof of their belief's value to them may be taken from the opposite character of the first Jamestown settlement, farther south, in Virginia. The Englishmen who landed there were motivated mainly by a hunt for profit. They had thought to pick off the wealth of the new country and then return rich to England. They were a band of individualists, and a much more ingratiating group than the Massachusetts men. But Virginia destroyed them. Massachusetts tried to kill off the Puritans, but they combined; they set up a communal society which, in the beginning, was little more than an armed camp with an autocratic and very devoted leadership. It was, however, an autocracy by consent, for they were united from top to bottom by a commonly held ideology whose perpetuation was the reason and

justification for all their sufferings. So their self-denial, their purposefulness, their suspicion of all vain pursuits, their hard-handed justice were altogether perfect instruments for the conquest of this space so antagonistic to man.

But the people of Salem in 1692 were not quite the dedicated folk that arrived on the *Mayflower.* A vast differentiation had taken place, and in their own time a revolution had unseated the royal government and substituted a junta which was at this moment in power. The times, to their eyes, must have been out of joint, and to the common folk must have seemed as insoluble and complicated as do ours today. It is not hard to see how easily many could have been led to believe that the time of confusion had been brought upon them by deep and darkling forces. No hint of such speculation appears on the court record, but social disorder in any age breeds such mystical suspicions, and when, as in Salem, wonders are brought forth from below the social surface, it is too much to expect people to hold back very long from laying on the victims with all the force of their frustrations.

The Salem tragedy, which is about to begin in these pages, developed from a paradox. It is a paradox in whose grip we still live, and there is no prospect yet that we will discover its resolution. Simply, it was this: for good purposes, even high purposes, the people of Salem developed a theocracy, a combine of state and religious power whose function was to keep the community together, and to prevent any kind of disunity that might open it to destruction by material or ideological enemies. It was forged for a necessary purpose and accomplished that purpose. But all organization is and must be grounded on the idea of exclusion and prohibition, just as two objects cannot occupy the same space. Evidently the time came in New England when the repressions of order were heavier than seemed warranted by the dangers against which the order was organized. The witch-hunt was a perverse manifestation of the panic which set in among all classes when the balance began to turn toward greater individual freedom.

When one rises above the individual villainy displayed, one can only pity them all, just as we shall be pitied someday. It is still impossible for

man to organize his social life without repressions, and the balance has yet to be struck between order and freedom.

The witch-hunt was not, however, a mere repression. It was also, and as importantly, a long overdue opportunity for everyone so inclined to express publicly his guilt and sins, under the cover of accusations against the victims. It suddenly became possible-and patriotic and holy-for a man to say that Martha Corey had come into his bedroom at night, and that, while his wife was sleeping at his side, Martha laid herself down on his chest and "nearly suffocated him." Of course it was her spirit only, but his satisfaction at confessing himself was no lighter than if it had been Martha herself. One could not ordinarily speak such things in public.

Long-held hatreds of neighbors could now be openly expressed, and vengeance taken, despite the Bible's charitable injunctions. Land-lust, which had been expressed by constant bickering over boundaries and deeds, could now be elevated to the arena of morality; one could cry witch against one's neighbor and feel perfectly justified in the bargain. Old scores could be settled on a plane of heavenly combat between Lucifer and the Lord; suspicions and the envy of the miserable toward the happy could and did burst out in the general revenge.

Reverend Parris is praying now, and, though we cannot hear his words, a sense of his confusion hangs about him. He mumbles, then seems about to weep; then he weeps, then prays again; but his daughter does not stir on the bed.

The door opens, and his Negro slave enters. Tituba is in her forties. Parris brought her with him from Barbados, where he spent some years as a merchant before entering the ministry. She enters as one does who can no longer bear to be barred from the sight of her beloved, but she is also very frightened because her slave sense has warned her that, as always, trouble in this house eventually lands on her back.

TITUBA, *already taking a step backward:* My Betty be hearty soon?

PARRIS: Out of here!

TITUBA, *backing to the door:* My Betty not goin' die …
PARRIS, *scrambling to his feet in a fury:* Out of my sight! *She is gone.* Out of my—*He is overcome with sobs. He clamps his teeth against them and closes the door and leans against it, exhausted.* Oh, my God! God help me! *Quaking with fear, mumbling to himself through his sobs, he goes to the bed and gently takes Betty's hand.* Betty. Child. Dear child. Will you wake, will you open up your eyes! Betty, little one …
He is bending to kneel again when his niece, Abigail Williams, seventeen, enters—a strikingly beautiful girl, an orphan, with an endless capacity for dissembling. Now she is all worry and apprehension and propriety.
ABIGAIL: Uncle? *He looks to her.* Susanna Walcott's here from Doctor Griggs.
PARRIS: Oh? Let her come, let her come.
ABIGAIL, *leaning out the door to call to Susanna, who is down the hall a few steps:* Come in, Susanna.
Susanna Walcott, a little younger than Abigail, a nervous, hurried girl, enters.
PARRIS, *eagerly:* What does the doctor say, child?
SUSANNA, *craning around Parris to get a look at Betty:* He bid me come and tell you, reverend sir, that he cannot discover no medicine for it in his books.
PARRIS: Then he must search on.
SUSANNA: Aye, sir, he have been searchin' his books since he left you, sir. But he bid me tell you, that you might look to unnatural things for the cause of it.
PARRIS, *his eyes going wide:* No-no. There be no unnatural cause here. Tell him I have sent for Reverend Hale of Beverly, and Mr. Hale will surely confirm that. Let him look to medicine and put out all thought of unnatural causes here. There be none.
SUSANNA: Aye, sir. He bid me tell you. *She turns to go.*
ABIGAIL: Speak nothin' of it in the village, Susanna.
PARRIS: Go directly home and speak nothing of unnatural causes.
SUSANNA: Aye, sir. I pray for her. *She goes out.*

ABIGAIL: Uncle, the rumor of witchcraft is all about; I think you'd best go down and deny it yourself. The parlor's packed with people, sir. I'll sit with her.

PARRIS, *pressed, turns on her:* And what shall I say to them? That my daughter and my niece I discovered dancing like heathen in the forest?

ABIGAIL: Uncle, we did dance; let you tell them I confessed it —and I'll be whipped if I must be. But they're speakin' of witchcraft. Betty's not witched.

PARRIS: Abigail, I cannot go before the congregation when I know you have not opened with me. What did you do with her in the forest?

ABIGAIL: We did dance, uncle, and when you leaped out of the bush so suddenly, Betty was frightened and then she fainted. And there's the whole of it.

PARRIS: Child. Sit you down.

ABIGAIL, *quavering, as she sits:* I would never hurt Betty. I love her dearly.

PARRIS: Now look you, child, your punishment will come in its time. But if you trafficked with spirits in the forest I must know it now, for surely my enemies will, and they will ruin me with it.

ABIGAIL: But we never conjured spirits.

PARRIS: Then why can she not move herself since midnight? This child is desperate! *Abigail lowers her eyes.* It must come out-my enemies will bring it out. Let me know what you done there. Abigail, do you understand that I have many enemies?

ABIGAIL: I have heard of it, uncle.

PARRIS : There is a faction that is sworn to drive me from my pulpit. Do you understand that?

ABIGAIL: I think so, sir.

PARRIS: Now then, in the midst of such disruption, my own household is discovered to be the very center of some obscene practice. Abominations are done in the forest-

ABIGAIL: It were sport, uncle!

PARRIS, *pointing at Betty:* You call this sport? *She lowers her eyes. He pleads:* Abigail, if you know something that may help the doctor, for God's sake tell it to me. *She is silent.* I saw Tituba waving her arms over the fire when I came on you. Why was she doing that? And I heard a screeching and gibberish coming from her mouth. She were swaying like a dumb beast over that fire!

ABIGAIL: She always sings her Barbados songs, and we dance.

PARRIS: I cannot blink what I saw, Abigail, for my enemies will not blink it. I saw a dress lying on the grass.

ABIGAIL, *innocently:* A dress?

PARRIS—*it is very hard to say:* Aye, a dress. And I thought I saw—someone naked running through the trees!

ABIGAIL, *in terror:* No one was naked! You mistake yourself, uncle!

PARRIS, *with anger:* I saw it! *He moves from her. Then, resolved:* Now tell me true, Abigail. And I pray you feel the weight of truth upon you, for now my ministry's at stake, my ministry and perhaps your cousin's life. Whatever abomination you have done, give me all of it now, for I dare not be taken unaware when I go before them down there.

ABIGAIL: There is nothin' more. I swear it, uncle.

PARRIS, *studies her, then nods, half convinced:* Abigail, I have fought here three long years to bend these stiff-necked people to me, and now, just now when some good respect is rising for me in the parish, you compromise my very character. I have given you a home, child, I have put clothes upon your back—now give me upright answer. Your name in the town—it is entirely white, is it not?

ABIGAIL, *with an edge of resentment:* Why, I am sure it is, sir. There be no blush about my name.

PARRIS, *to the point:* Abigail, is there any other cause than you have told me, for your being discharged from Goody Proctor's service? I have heard it said, and I tell you as I heard it, that she comes so rarely to the church this year for she will not sit so close to something soiled. What signified that remark?

ABIGAIL: She hates me, uncle, she must, for I would not be her slave. It's a bitter woman, a lying, cold, sniveling woman, and I will not work for such a woman!
PARRIS: She may be. And yet it has troubled me that you are now seven month out of their house, and in all this time no other family has ever called for your service.
ABIGAIL: They want slaves, not such as I. Let them send to Barbados for that. I will not black my face for any of them! *With ill-concealed resentment at him:* Do you begrudge my bed, uncle?
PARRIS: No-no.
ABIGAIL, *in a temper:* My name is good in the village! I will not have it said my name is soiled! Goody Proctor is a gossiping liar!
Enter Mrs. Ann Putnam. She is a twisted soul of forty-five, a death-ridden woman, haunted by dreams.
PARRIS, as *soon as the door begins to open:* No-no, I cannot have anyone. *He sees her, and a certain deference springs into him, although his worry remains.* Why, Goody Putnam, come in.
MRS. PUTNAM, *full of breath, shiny-eyed:* It is a marvel. It is surely a stroke of hell upon you.
PARRIS: No, Goody Putnam, it is—
MRS. PUTNAM, *glancing at* Betty : How high did she fly, how high?
PARRIS: No, no, she never flew-MRS. PUTNAM, *very pleased with it:* Why, it's sure she did. Mr. Collins saw her goin' over Ingersoll's barn, and come down light as bird, he says!
PARRIS: Now, look you, Goody Putnam, she never—*Enter Thomas Putnam, a well-to-do, hard-handed landowner, near fifty.* Oh, good morning, Mr. Putnam.
PUTNAM: It is a providence the thing is out now! It is a providence. *He goes directly to the bed.*
PARRIS: What's out, sir, what's-?
Mrs. Putnam goes to the bed.
PUTNAM, *looking down at Betty:* Why, *her* eyes is closed! Look you, Ann.
MRS. PUTNAM: Why, that's strange. *To Parris:* Ours is open.

PARRIS, *shocked:* Your Ruth is sick?
MRS. PUTNAM, *with vicious certainty:* I'd not call it sick; the Devil's touch is heavier than sick. It's death, y'know, it's death drivin' into them, forked and hoofed.
PARRIS: Oh, pray not! Why, how does Ruth ail?
MRS. PUTNAM : She ails as she must-she never waked this morning, but her eyes open and she walks, and hears naught, sees naught, and cannot eat. Her soul is taken, surely.
Parris is struck.
PUTNAM, *as though for further details:* They say you've sent for Reverend Hale of Beverly?
PARRIS, *with dwindling conviction now:* A precaution only. He has much experience in all demonic arts, and I-MRS. PUTNAM: He has indeed; and found a witch in Beverly last year, and let you remember that.
PARRIS: Now, Goody Ann, they only thought that were a witch, and I am certain there be no element of witchcraft here.
PUTNAM: No witchcraft! Now look you, Mr. Parris-PARRIS: Thomas, Thomas, I pray you, leap not to witchcraft. I know that you-you least of all, Thomas, would ever wish so disastrous a charge laid upon me. We cannot leap to witchcraft. They will howl me out of Salem for such corruption in my house.

A word about Thomas Putnam. He was a man with many grievances, at least one of which appears justified. Some time before, his wife's brother-in-law, James Bayley, had been turned down as minister of Salem. Bayley had all the qualifications, and a two-thirds vote into the bargain, but a faction stopped his acceptance, for reasons that are not clear.

Thomas Putnam was the eldest son of the richest man in the village. He had fought the Indians at Narragansett, and was deeply interested in parish affairs. He undoubtedly felt it poor payment that the village should so blatantly disregard his candidate for one of its more important offices, especially since he regarded himself as the intellectual superior of most of the people around him.

His vindictive nature was demonstrated long before the witchcraft began. A former Salem minister, George Burroughs, had had to borrow money to pay for his wife's funeral, and, since the parish was remiss in his salary, he was soon bankrupt. Thomas and his brother John had Burroughs jailed for debts the man did not owe. The incident is important only in that Burroughs succeeded in becoming minister where Bayley, Thomas Putnam's brother-in-law, had been rejected; the motif of resentment is clear here. Thomas Putnam felt that his own name and the honor of his family had been smirched by the village, and he meant to right matters however he could.

Another reason to believe him a deeply embittered man was his attempt to break his father's will, which left a disproportionate amount to a stepbrother. As with every other public cause in which he tried to force his way, he failed in this.

So it is not surprising to find that so many accusations against people are in the handwriting of Thomas Putnam, or that his name is so often found as a witness corroborating the supernatural testimony, or that his daughter led the crying-out at the most opportune junctures of the trials, especially when—But we'll speak of that when we come to it.

PUTNAM—at *the moment he is intent upon getting Parris, for whom he has only contempt, to move toward the abyss:* Mr. Parris, I have taken your part in all contention here, and I would continue; but I cannot if you hold back in this. There are hurtful, vengeful spirits layin' hands on these children.
PARRIS: But, Thomas, you cannot—
PUTNAM: Ann! Tell Mr. Parris what you have done.
MRS. PUTNAM: Reverend Parris, I have laid seven babies unbaptized in the earth. Believe me, sir, you never saw more hearty babies born. And yet, each would wither in my arms the very night of their birth. I have spoke nothin', but my heart has clamored intimations. And now, this year, my Ruth, my only- I see her turning strange. A secret child she has become this

year, and shrivels like a sucking mouth were pullin' on her life too. And so I thought to send her to your Tituba-
PARRIS: To Tituba! What may Tituba—?
MRS. PUTNAM: Tituba knows how to speak to the dead, Mr. Parris.
PARRIS: Goody Ann, it is a formidable sin to conjure up the dead!
MRS. PUTNAM: I take it on my soul, but who else may surely tell us what person murdered my babies?
PARRIS, *horrified:* Woman!
MRS. PUTNAM: They were murdered, Mr. Parris! And mark this proof! Mark it! Last night my Ruth were ever so close to their little spirits; I know it, sir. For how else is she struck dumb now except some power of darkness would stop her mouth? It is a marvelous sign, Mr. Parris!
PUTNAM: Don't you understand it, sir? There is a murdering witch among us, bound to keep herself in the dark. *Parris turns to Betty, a frantic terror rising in him.* Let your enemies make of it what they will, you cannot blink it more.
PARRIS, to *Abigail:* Then you were conjuring spirits last night.
ABIGAIL, *whispering:* Not I, sir-Tituba and Ruth.
PARRIS *turns now, with new fear, and goes to Betty, looks down at her, and then, gazing off:* Oh, Abigail, what proper payment for my charity! Now I am undone.
PUTNAM: You are not undone! Let you take hold here. Wait for no one to charge you—declare it yourself. You have discovered witchcraft-
PARRIS: In my house? In my house, Thomas? They will topple me with this! They will make of it a-
Enter Mercy Lewis, the Putnams' servant, a fat, sly, merciless girl of eighteen.
MERCY: Your pardons. I only thought to see how Betty is.
PUTNAM: Why aren't you home? Who's with Ruth?
MERCY: Her grandma come. She's improved a little, I think-she give a powerful sneeze before.
MRS. PUTNAM: Ah, there's a sign of life!

MERCY: I'd fear no more, Goody Putnam. It were a grand sneeze; another like it will shake her wits together, I'm sure. *She goes to the bed to look.*
PARRIS: Will you leave me now, Thomas? I would pray a while alone.
ABIGAIL: Uncle, you've prayed since midnight. Why do you not go down and—
PARRIS: No-no. *To Putnam:* I have no answer for that crowd. I'll wait till Mr. Hale arrives. *To get Mrs. Putnam to leave:* If you will, Goody Ann …
PUTNAM: Now look you, sir. Let you strike out against the Devil, and the village will bless you for it! Come down, speak to them-pray with them. They're thirsting for your word, Mister ! Surely you'll pray with them.
PARRIS, *swayed:* I'll lead them in a psalm, but let you say nothing of witchcraft yet. I will not discuss it. The cause is yet unknown. I have had enough contention since I came; I want no more.
MRS. PUTNAM: Mercy, you go home to Ruth, d'y'hear?
MERCY: Aye, mum.
Mrs. Putnam goes out.
PARRIS, *to Abigail:* If she starts for the window, cry for me at once.
ABIGAIL: I will, uncle.
PARRIS, *to Putnam:* There is a terrible power in her arms today. *He goes out with Putnam.*
ABIGAIL, *with hushed trepidation:* How is Ruth sick?
MERCY: It's weirdish, I know not-she seems to walk like a dead one since last night.
ABIGAIL, *turns at once and goes to Betty, and now, with fear in her voice:* Betty? *Betty doesn't move. She shakes her.* Now stop this! Betty! Sit up now!
Betty doesn't stir. Mercy comes over.
MERCY: Have you tried beatin' her? I gave Ruth a good one and it waked her for a minute. Here, let me have her.
ABIGAIL, *holding Mercy back:* No, he'll be comin' up. Listen, now; if they be questioning us, tell them we danced-I told him as much already.
MERCY: Aye. And what more?

ABIGAIL: He knows Tituba conjured Ruth's sisters to come out of the grave.
MERCY: And what more?
ABIGAIL: He saw you naked.
MERCY, *clapping her hands together with a frightened laugh:* Oh, Jesus!
Enter Mary Warren, breathless. She is seventeen, a subservient, naïve, lonely girl.
MARY WARREN: What'll we do? The village is out! I just come from the farm; the whole country's talkin' witchcraft! They'll be callin' us witches, Abby!
MERCY, *pointing and looking at Mary Warren:* She means to tell, I know it.
MARY WARREN : Abby, we've got to tell. Witchery's a hangin' error, a hangin' like they done in Boston two year ago! We must tell the truth, Abby! You'll only be whipped for dancin', and the other things!
ABIGAIL: Oh, *we'll* be whipped!
MARY WARREN: I never done none of it, Abby. I only looked!
MERCY, *moving menacingly toward Mary:* Oh, you're a great one for lookin', aren't you, Mary Warren? What a grand peeping courage you have!
Betty, on the bed, whimpers. Abigail turns to her at once.
ABIGAIL: Betty? She goes to Betty. Now, Betty, dear, wake up now. It's Abigail. *She sits Betty up and furiously shakes her.* I'll beat you, Betty! *Betty whimpers.* My, you seem improving. I talked to your papa and I told him everything. So there's nothing to-
BETTY, *darts off the bed, frightened of Abigail, and flattens herself against the wall:* I want my mama!
ABIGAIL, *with alarm, as she cautiously approaches Betty:* What ails you, Betty? Your mama's dead and buried.
BETTY : I'll fly to Mama. Let me fly! *She raises her arms as though to fly, and streaks for the window, gets one leg out.*
ABIGAIL, *pulling her away from the window:* I told him everything ; he knows now, he knows everything we—
BETTY: You drank blood, Abby! You didn't tell him that!

ABIGAIL: Betty, you never say that again! You will never-
BETTY: You did, you did! You drank a charm to kill John Proctor's wife! You drank a charm to kill Goody Proctor!
ABIGAIL, *smashes her across the face:* Shut it! Now shut it!
BETTY, *collapsing on the bed:* Mama, Mama! *She dissolves into sobs.*
ABIGAIL: Now look you. All of you. We danced. And Tituba conjured Ruth Putnam's dead sisters. And that is all. And mark this. Let either of you breathe a word, or the edge of a word, about the other things, and I will come to you in the black of some terrible night and I will bring a pointy reckoning that will shudder you. And you know I can do it; I saw Indians smash my dear parents' heads on the pillow next to mine, and I have seen some reddish work done at night, and I can make you wish you had never seen the sun go down! *She goes to Betty and roughly sits her up.* Now, you-sit up and stop this!
But Betty collapses in her hands and lies inert on the bed.
MARY WARREN, *with hysterical fright:* What's got her? *Abigail stares in fright at Betty.* Abby, she's going to die! It's a sin to conjure, and we-
ABIGAIL, *starting for Mary:* I say shut it, Mary Warren!
Enter John Proctor. On seeing him, Mary Warren leaps in fright.

Proctor was a farmer in his middle thirties. He need not have been a partisan of any faction in the town, but there is evidence to suggest that he had a sharp and biting way with hypocrites. He was the kind of man—powerful of body, even-tempered, and not easily led—who cannot refuse support to partisans without drawing their deepest resentment. In Proctor's presence a fool felt his foolishness instantly-and a Proctor is always marked for calumny therefore.

But as we shall see, the steady manner he displays does not spring from an untroubled soul. He is a sinner, a sinner not only against the moral fashion of the time, but against his own vision of decent conduct. These people had no ritual for the washing away of sins. It is another trait we inherited from them, and it has helped to discipline us as well as to breed hypocrisy among us. Proctor, respected and even feared in Salem, has come

to regard himself as a kind of fraud. But no hint of this has yet appeared on the surface, and as he enters from the crowded parlor below it is a man in his prime we see, with a quiet confidence and an unexpressed, hidden force. Mary Warren, his servant, can barely speak for embarrassment and fear.

MARY WARREN: Oh! I'm just going home, Mr. Proctor.
PROCTOR : Be you foolish, Mary Warren? Be you deaf? I forbid you leave the house, did I not? Why shall I pay you? I am looking for you more often than my cows!
MARY WARREN: I only come to see the great doings in the world.
PROCTOR: I'll show you a great doin' on your arse one of these days. Now get you home; my wife is waitin' with your work! *Trying to retain a shred of dignity, she goes slowly out.*
MERCY LEWIS, *both afraid of him and strangely titillated:* I'd best be off. I have my Ruth to watch. Good morning, Mr. Proctor.
Mercy sidles out. Since Proctor's entrance, Abigail has stood as though on tiptoe, absorbing his presence, wide-eyed. He glances at her, then goes to Betty on the bed.
ABIGAIL: Gah! I'd almost forgot how strong you are, John Proctor!
PROCTOR, looking at Abigail now, the faintest suggestion of a knowing smile on his face: What's this mischief here?
ABIGAIL, *with a nervous laugh:* Oh, she's only gone silly somehow.
PROCTOR: The road past my house is a pilgrimage to Salem all morning. The town's mumbling witchcraft.
ABIGAIL: Oh, posh! *Winningly she comes a little closer, with a confidential, wicked air.* We were dancin' in the woods last night, and my uncle leaped in on us. She took fright, is all.
PROCTOR, his smile widening: Ah, you're wicked yet, aren't y'! *A trill of expectant laughter escapes her, and she dares come closer, feverishly looking into his eyes.* You'll be clapped in the stocks before you're twenty.
He takes a step to go, and she springs into his path.
ABIGAIL: Give me a word, John. A soft word. *Her concentrated desire destroys his smile.*

PROCTOR: No, no, Abby. That's done with.
ABIGAIL, *tauntingly:* You come five mile to see a silly girl fly? I know you better.
PROCTOR, *setting her firmly out of his path:* I come to see what mischief your uncle's brewin' now. *With final emphasis:* Put it out of mind, Abby.
ABIGAIL, *grasping his hand before he can release her:* John-I am waitin' for you every night.
PROCTOR: Abby, I never give you hope to wait for me.
ABIGAIL, *now beginning to anger-she can't believe it:* I have something better than hope, I think!
PROCTOR: Abby, you'll put it out of mind. I'll not be comin' for you more.
ABIGAIL: You're surely sportin' with me.
PROCTOR: You know me better.
ABIGAIL: I know how you clutched my back behind your house and sweated like a stallion whenever I come near! Or did I dream that? It's she put me out, you cannot pretend it were you. I saw your face when she put me out, and you loved me then and you do now!
PROCTOR: Abby, that's a wild thing to say—
ABIGAIL: A wild thing may say wild things. But not so wild, I think. I have seen you since she put me out; I have seen you nights.
PROCTOR: I have hardly stepped off my farm this sevenmonth.
ABIGAIL: I have a sense for heat, John, and yours has drawn me to my window, and I have seen you looking up, burning in your loneliness. Do you tell me you've never looked up at my window?
PROCTOR: I may have looked up.
ABIGAIL, *now softening:* And you must. You are no wintry man. I know you, John. I *know* you. *She is weeping.* I cannot sleep for dreamin'; I cannot dream but I wake and walk about the house as though I'd find you comin' through some door. *She clutches him desperately.*
PROCTOR, *gently pressing her from him, with great sympathy but firmly:* Child—
ABIGAIL, *with a flash of anger:* How do you call me child!

PROCTOR: Abby, I may think of you softly from time to time. But I will cut off my hand before I'll ever reach for you again. Wipe it out of mind. We never touched, Abby.
ABIGAIL: Aye, but we did.
PROCTOR: Aye, but we did not.
ABIGAIL, *with a bitter anger:* Oh, I marvel how such a strong man may let such a sickly wife be—
PROCTOR, *angered—at himself as well:* You'll speak nothin' of Elizabeth!
ABIGAIL: She is blackening my name in the village! She is telling lies about me! She is a cold, sniveling woman, and you bend to her! Let her turn you like a—
PROCTOR, *shaking her:* Do you look for whippin'?
A psalm is heard being sung below.
ABIGAIL, *in tears:* I look for John Proctor that took me from my sleep and put knowledge in my heart! I never knew what pretense Salem was, I never knew the lying lessons I was taught by all these Christian women and their covenanted men! And now you bid me tear the light out of my eyes? I will not, I cannot! You loved me, John Proctor, and whatever sin it is, you love me yet! *He turns abruptly to go out. She rushes to him.* John, pity me, pity me!
The words "going up to Jesus" are heard in the psalm, and Betty claps her ears suddenly and whines loudly.
ABIGAIL: Betty? *She hurries to Betty, who is now sitting up and screaming. Proctor goes to Betty as Abigail is trying to pull her hands down, calling "Betty!"*
PROCTOR, *growing unnerved:* What's she doing? Girl, what ails you? Stop that wailing!
The singing has stopped in the midst of this, and now Parris rushes in.
PARRIS: What happened? What are you doing to her? Betty! *He rushes to the bed, crying, "Betty, Betty!" Mrs. Putnam enters, feverish with curiosity, and with her Thomas Putnam and Mercy Lewis. Parris, at the bed, keeps lightly slapping Betty's face, while she moans and tries to get up.*
ABIGAIL: She heard you singin' and suddenly she's up and screamin'.

MRS. PUTNAM: The psalm! The psalm! She cannot bear to hear the Lord's name!
PARRIS: No, God forbid. Mercy, run to the doctor! Tell him what's happened here! *Mercy Lewis rushes out.*
MRS. PUTNAM: Mark it for a sign, mark it!
Rebecca Nurse, seventy-two, enters. She is white-haired, leaning upon her walking-stick.
PUTNAM, *pointing at the whimpering Betty : That is a* notorious sign of witchcraft afoot, Goody Nurse, a prodigious sign!
MRS. PUTNAM: My mother told me that! When they cannot bear to hear the name of—
PARRIS, *trembling:* Rebecca, Rebecca, go to her, we're lost. She suddenly cannot bear to hear the Lord's—
Giles Corey, eighty-three, enters. He is knotted with muscle, canny, inquisitive, and still powerful.
REBECCA: There is hard sickness here, Giles Corey, so please to keep the quiet.
GILES: I've not said a word. No one here can testify I've said a word. Is she going to fly again? I hear she flies.
PUTNAM: Man, be quiet now!
Everything is quiet. Rebecca walks across the room to the bed. Gentleness exudes from her. Betty is quietly whimpering, eyes shut. Rebecca simply stands over the child, who gradually quiets.

And while they are so absorbed, we may put a word in for Rebecca. Rebecca was the wife of Francis Nurse, who, from all accounts, was one of those men for whom both sides of the argument had to have respect. He was called upon to arbitrate disputes as though he were an unofficial judge, and Rebecca also enjoyed the high opinion most people had for him. By the time of the delusion, they had three hundred acres, and their children were settled in separate homesteads within the same estate. However, Francis had originally rented the land, and one theory has it that, as he gradually paid for it and raised his social status, there were those who resented his rise.

Another suggestion to explain the systematic campaign against Rebecca, and inferentially against Francis, is the land war he fought with his neighbors, one of whom was a Putnam. This squabble grew to the proportions of a battle in the woods between partisans of both sides, and it is said to have lasted for two days. As for Rebecca herself, the general opinion of her character was so high that to explain how anyone dared cry her out for a witch—and more, how adults could bring themselves to lay hands on her—we must look to the fields and boundaries of that time.

As we have seen, Thomas Putnam's man for the Salem ministry was Bayley. The Nurse clan had been in the faction that prevented Bayley's taking office. In addition, certain families allied to the Nurses by blood or friendship, and whose farms were contiguous with the Nurse farm or close to it, combined to break away from the Salem town authority and set up Topsfield, a new and independent entity whose existence was resented by old Salemites.

That the guiding hand behind the outcry was Putnam's is indicated by the fact that, as soon as it began, this Topsfield-Nurse faction absented themselves from church in protest and disbelief. It was Edward and Jonathan Putnam who signed the first complaint against Rebecca; and Thomas Putnam's little daughter was the one who fell into a fit at the hearing and pointed to Rebecca as her attacker. To top it all, Mrs. Putnam —who is now staring at the bewitched child on the bed—soon accused Rebecca's spirit of "tempting her to iniquity," a charge that had more truth in it than Mrs. Putnam could know.

MRS. PUTNAM, *astonished:* What have you done?
Rebecca, in thought, now leaves the bedside and sits.
PARRIS, *wondrous and relieved:* What do you make of it, Rebecca?
PUTNAM, *eagerly:* Goody Nurse, will you go to my Ruth and see if you can wake her?
REBECCA, *sitting:* I think she'll wake in time. Pray calm yourselves. I have eleven children, and I am twenty-six times a grandma, and I have seen them all through their silly seasons, and when it come on them they will run

the Devil bowlegged keeping up with their mischief. I think she'll wake when she tires of it. A child's spirit is like a child, you can never catch it by running after it; you must stand still, and, for love, it will soon itself come back.

PROCTOR: Aye, that's the truth of it, Rebecca.

MRS. PUTNAM: This is no silly season, Rebecca. My Ruth is bewildered, Rebecca; she cannot eat.

REBECCA: Perhaps she is not hungered yet. To *Parris:* I hope you are not decided to go in search of loose spirits, Mr. Parris. I've heard promise of that outside.

PARRIS: A wide opinion's running in the parish that the Devil may be among us, and I would satisfy them that they are wrong.

PROCTOR: Then let you come out and call them wrong. Did you consult the wardens before you called this minister to look for devils?

PARRIS: He is not coming to look for devils!

PROCTOR: Then what's he coming for?

PUTNAM: There be children dyin' in the village, Mister!

PROCTOR: I seen none dyin'. This society will not be a bag to swing around your head, Mr. Putnam. To *Parris:* Did you call a meeting before you—?

PUTNAM: I am sick of meetings; cannot the man turn his head without he have a meeting?

PROCTOR: He may turn his head, but not to Hell!

REBECCA: Pray, John, be calm. *Pause. He defers to her.* Mr. Parris, I think you'd best send Reverend Hale back as soon as he come. This will set us all to arguin' again in the society, and we thought to have peace this year. I think we ought rely on the doctor now, and good prayer.

MRS. PUTNAM: Rebecca, the doctor's baffled!

REBECCA: If so he is, then let us go to God for the cause of it. There is prodigious danger in the seeking of loose spirits. I fear it, I fear it. Let us rather blame ourselves and—

PUTNAM: How may we blame ourselves? I am one of nine sons; the Putnam seed have peopled this province. And yet I have but one child left

of eight—and now she shrivels!
REBECCA: I cannot fathom that.
MRS. PUTNAM, *with a growing edge of sarcasm:* But I must! You think it God's work you should never lose a child, nor grandchild either, and I bury all but one? There are wheels within wheels in this village, and fires within fires!
PUTNAM, *to Parris :* When Reverend Hale comes, you will proceed to look for signs of witchcraft here.
PROCTOR, *to Putnam:* You cannot command Mr. Parris. We vote by name in this society, not by acreage.
PUTNAM : I never heard you worried so on this society, Mr. Proctor. I do not think I saw you at Sabbath meeting since snow flew.
PROCTOR: I have trouble enough without I come five mile to hear him preach only hellfire and bloody damnation. Take it to heart, Mr. Parris. There are many others who stay away from church these days because you hardly ever mention God any more.
PARRIS, *now aroused:* Why, that's a drastic charge!
REBECCA: It's somewhat true; there are many that quail to bring their children—
PARRIS: I do not preach for children, Rebecca. It is not the children who are unmindful of their obligations toward this ministry.
REBECCA: Are there really those unmindful?
PARRIS: I should say the better half of Salem village—
PUTNAM: And more than that!
PARRIS: Where is my wood? My contract provides I be supplied with all my firewood. I am waiting since November for a stick, and even in November I had to show my frostbitten hands like some London beggar!
GILES: You are allowed six pound a year to buy your wood, Mr. Parris.
PARRIS: I regard that six pound as part of my salary. I am paid little enough without I spend six pound on firewood.
PROCTOR: Sixty, plus six for firewood—
PARRIS: The salary is sixty-six pound, Mr. Proctor! I am not some preaching farmer with a book under my arm; I am a graduate of Harvard

College.
GILES: Aye, and well instructed in arithmetic!
PARRIS: Mr. Corey, you will look far for a man of my kind at sixty pound a year! I am not used to this poverty; I left a thrifty business in the Barbados to serve the Lord. I do not fathom it, why am I persecuted here? I cannot offer one proposition but there be a howling riot of argument. I have often wondered if the Devil be in it somewhere; I cannot understand you people otherwise.
PROCTOR: Mr. Parris, you are the first minister ever did demand the deed to this house—
PARRIS: Man! Don't a minister deserve a house to live in?
PROCTOR: To live in, yes. But to ask ownership is like you shall own the meeting house itself; the last meeting I were at you spoke so long on deeds and mortgages I thought it were an auction.
PARRIS: I want a mark of confidence, is all! I am your third preacher in seven years. I do not wish to be put out like the cat whenever some majority feels the whim. You people seem not to comprehend that a minister is the Lord's man in the parish; a minister is not to be so lightly crossed and contradicted—
PUTNAM: Aye!
PARRIS: There is either obedience or the church will burn like Hell is burning!
PROCTOR: Can you speak one minute without we land in Hell again? I am sick of Hell!
PARRIS: It is not for you to say what is good for you to hear!
PROCTOR: I may speak my heart, I think!
PARRIS, *in a fury:* What, are we Quakers? We are not Quakers here yet, Mr. Proctor. And you may tell that to your followers!
PROCTOR: My followers!
PARRIS—now *he's out with it:* There is a party in this church. I am not blind; there is a faction and a party.
PROCTOR: Against you?
PUTNAM: Against him and all authority!

PROCTOR: Why, then I must find it and join it.
There is shock among the others.
REBECCA: He does not mean that.
PUTNAM: He confessed it now!
PROCTOR: I mean it solemnly, Rebecca; I like not the smell of this "authority."
REBECCA: No, you cannot break charity with your minister. You are another kind, John. Clasp his hand, make your peace.
PROCTOR: I have a crop to sow and lumber to drag home. *He goes angrily to the door and turns to Corey with a smile.* What say you, Giles, let's find the party. He says there's a party.
GILES: I've changed my opinion of this man, John. Mr. Parris, I beg your pardon. I never thought you had so much iron in you.
PARRIS, *surprised:* Why, thank you, Giles!
GILES: It suggests to the mind what the trouble be among us all these years. To *all:* Think on it. Wherefore is everybody suing everybody else? Think on it now, it's a deep thing, and dark as a pit. I have been six time in court this year—
PROCTOR, *familiarly, with warmth, although he knows he is approaching the edge of Giles' tolerance with this:* Is it the Devil's fault that a man cannot say you good morning without you clap him for defamation? You're old, Giles, and you're not hearin' so well as you did.
GILES—he cannot be crossed: John Proctor, I have only last month collected four pound damages for you publicly sayin' I burned the roof off your house, and I—
PROCTOR, *laughing :* I never said no such thing, but I've paid you for it, so I hope I can call you deaf without charge. Now come along, Giles, and help me drag my lumber home.
PUTNAM: A moment, Mr. Proctor. What lumber is that you're draggin', if I may ask you?
PROCTOR: My lumber. From out my forest by the riverside.
PUTNAM: Why, we are surely gone wild this year. What anarchy is this? That tract is in my bounds, it's in my bounds, Mr. Proctor.

PROCTOR: In your bounds! *Indicating Rebecca:* I bought that tract from Goody Nurse's husband five months ago.
PUTNAM: He had no right to sell it. It stands clear in my grandfather's will that all the land between the river and—
PROCTOR: Your grandfather had a habit of willing land that never belonged to him, if I may say it plain.
GILES: That's God's truth; he nearly willed away my north pasture but he knew I'd break his fingers before he'd set his name to it. Let's get your lumber home, John. I feel a sudden will to work coming on.
PUTNAM: You load one oak of mine and you'll fight to drag it home!
GILES: Aye, and we'll win too, Putnam—this fool and I. Come on! *He turns to Proctor and starts out.*
PUTNAM: I'll have my men on you, Corey! I'll clap a writ on you!
Enter Reverend John Hale of Beverly.

Mr. Hale is nearing forty, a tight-skinned, eager-eyed intellectual. This is a beloved errand for him; on being called here to ascertain witchcraft he felt the pride of the specialist whose unique knowledge has at last been publicly called for. Like almost all men of learning, he spent a good deal of his time pondering the invisible world, especially since he had himself encountered a witch in his parish not long before. That woman, however, turned into a mere pest under his searching scrutiny, and the child she had allegedly been afflicting recovered her normal behavior after Hale had given her his kindness and a few days of rest in his own house. However, that experience never raised a doubt in his mind as to the reality of the underworld or the existence of Lucifer's many-faced lieutenants. And his belief is not to his discredit. Better minds than Hale's were—and still are—convinced that there is a society of spirits beyond our ken. One cannot help noting that one of his lines has never yet raised a laugh in any audience that has seen this play; it is his assurance that "We cannot look to superstition in this. The Devil is precise." Evidently we are not quite certain even now whether diabolism is holy and not to be scoffed at. And it is no accident that we should be so bemused.

Like Reverend Hale and the others on this stage, we conceive the Devil as a necessary part of a respectable view of cosmology. Ours is a divided empire in which certain ideas and emotions and actions are of God, and their opposites are of Lucifer. It is as impossible for most men to conceive of a morality without sin as of an earth without "sky." Since 1692 a great but superficial change has wiped out God's beard and the Devil's horns, but the world is still gripped between two diametrically opposed absolutes. The concept of unity, in which positive and negative are attributes of the same force, in which good and evil are relative, ever-changing, and always joined to the same phenomenon—such a concept is still reserved to the physical sciences and to the few who have grasped the history of ideas. When it is recalled that until the Christian era the underworld was never regarded as a hostile area, that all gods were useful and essentially friendly to man despite occasional lapses; when we see the steady and methodical inculcation into humanity of the idea of man's worthlessness—until redeemed—the necessity of the Devil may become evident as a weapon, a weapon designed and used time and time again in every age to whip men into a surrender to a particular church or church-state.

Our difficulty in believing the—for want of a better word—political inspiration of the Devil is due in great part to the fact that he is called up and damned not only by our social antagonists but by our own side, whatever it may be. The Catholic Church, through its Inquisition, is famous for cultivating Lucifer as the arch-fiend, but the Church's enemies relied no less upon the Old Boy to keep the human mind enthralled. Luther was himself accused of alliance with Hell, and he in turn accused his enemies. To complicate matters further, he believed that he had had contact with the Devil and had argued theology with him. I am not surprised at this, for at my own university a professor of history—a Lutheran, by the way—used to assemble his graduate students, draw the shades, and commune in the classroom with Erasmus. He was never, to my knowledge, officially scoffed at for this, the reason being that the university officials, like most of us, are the children of a history which still sucks at the Devil's teats. At this writing, only England has held back before the temptations of contemporary

diabolism. In the countries of the Communist ideology, all resistance of any import is linked to the totally malign capitalist succubi, and in America any man who is not reactionary in his views is open to the charge of alliance with the Red hell. Political opposition, thereby, is given an inhumane overlay which then justifies the abrogation of all normally applied customs of civilized intercourse. A political policy is equated with moral right, and opposition to it with diabolical malevolence. Once such an equation is effectively made, society becomes a congerie of plots and counterplots, and the main role of government changes from that of the arbiter to that of the scourge of God.

The results of this process are no different now from what they ever were, except sometimes in the degree of cruelty inflicted, and not always even in that department. Normally the actions and deeds of a man were all that society felt comfortable in judging. The secret intent of an action was left to the ministers, priests, and rabbis to deal with. When diabolism rises, however, actions are the least important manifests of the true nature of a man. The Devil, as Reverend Hale said, is a wily one, and, until an hour before he fell, even God thought him beautiful in Heaven.

The analogy, however, seems to falter when one considers that, while there were no witches then, there are Communists and capitalists now, and in each camp there is certain proof that spies of each side are at work undermining the other. But this is a snobbish objection and not at all warranted by the facts. I have no doubt that people *were* communing with, and even worshiping, the Devil in Salem, and if the whole truth could be known in this case, as it is in others, we should discover a regular and conventionalized propitiation of the dark spirit. One certain evidence of this is the confession of Tituba, the slave of Reverend Parris, and another is the behavior of the children who were known to have indulged in sorceries with her.

There are accounts of similar *klatches* in Europe, where the daughters of the towns would assemble at night and, sometimes with fetishes, sometimes with a selected young man, give themselves to love, with some bastardly results. The Church, sharp-eyed as it must be when gods long dead are

brought to life, condemned these orgies as witchcraft and interpreted them rightly, as a resurgence of the Dionysiac forces it had crushed long before. Sex, sin, and the Devil were early linked, and so they continued to be in Salem, and are today. From all accounts there are no more puritanical mores in the world than those enforced by the Communists in Russia, where women's fashions, for instance, are as prudent and all-covering as any American Baptist would desire. The divorce laws lay a tremendous responsibility on the father for the care of his children. Even the laxity of divorce regulations in the early years of the revolution was undoubtedly a revulsion from the nineteenth-century Victorian immobility of marriage and the consequent hypocrisy that developed from it. If for no other reasons, a state so powerful, so jealous of the uniformity of its citizens, cannot long tolerate the atomization of the family. And yet, in American eyes at least, there remains the conviction that the Russian attitude toward women is lascivious. It is the Devil working again, just as he is working within the Slav who is shocked at the very idea of a woman's disrobing herself in a burlesque show. Our opposites are always robed in sexual sin, and it is from this unconscious conviction that demonology gains both its attractive sensuality and its capacity to infuriate and frighten.

Coming into Salem now, Reverend Hale conceives of himself much as a young doctor on his first call. His painfully acquired armory of symptoms, catchwords, and diagnostic procedures is now to be put to use at last. The road from Beverly is unusually busy this morning, and he has passed a hundred rumors that make him smile at the ignorance of the yeomanry in this most precise science. He feels himself allied with the best minds of Europe—kings, philosophers, scientists, and ecclesiasts of all churches. His goal is light, goodness and its preservation, and he knows the exaltation of the blessed whose intelligence, sharpened by minute examinations of enormous tracts, is finally called upon to face what may be a bloody fight with the Fiend himself.

He appears loaded down with half a dozen heavy books.
HALE: Pray you, someone take these!

PARRIS, delighted: Mr. Hale! Oh! it's good to see you again! Taking some books: My, they're heavy!
HALE, *setting down his books:* They must be; they are weighted with authority.
PARRIS, *a little scared:* Well, you do come prepared!
HALE: We shall need hard study if it comes to tracking down the Old Boy. *Noticing Rebecca :* You cannot be Rebecca Nurse?
REBECCA: I am, sir. Do you know me?
HALE: It's strange how I knew you, but I suppose you look as such a good soul should. We have all heard of your great charities in Beverly.
PARRIS: Do you know this gentleman? Mr. Thomas Putnam. And his good wife Ann.
HALE: Putnam! I had not expected such distinguished company, sir.
PUTNAM, *pleased:* It does not seem to help us today, Mr. Hale. We look to you to come to our house and save our child.
HALE: Your child ails too?
MRS. PUTNAM: Her soul, her soul seems flown away. She sleeps and yet she walks …
PUTNAM: She cannot eat.
HALE: Cannot eat! *Thinks on it. Then, to Proctor and Giles Corey:* Do you men have afflicted children?
PARRIS: No, no, these are farmers. John Proctor—
GILES COREY: He don't believe in witches.
PROCTOR, to *Hale:* I never spoke on witches one way or the other. Will you come, Giles?
GILES: No—no, John, I think not. I have some few queer questions of my own to ask this fellow.
PROCTOR: I've heard you to be a sensible man, Mr. Hale. I hope you'll leave some of it in Salem.
Proctor goes. Hale stands embarrassed for an instant.
PARRIS, *quickly:* Will you look at my daughter, sir? *Leads Hale to the bed.* She has tried to leap out the window; we discovered her this morning on the highroad, waving her arms as though she'd fly.

HALE, *narrowing his eyes:* Tries to fly.
PUTNAM: She cannot bear to hear the Lord's name, Mr. Hale; that's a sure sign of witchcraft afloat.
HALE, *holding up his hands:* No, no. Now let me instruct you. We cannot look to superstition in this. The Devil is precise; the marks of his presence are definite as stone, and I must tell you all that I shall not proceed unless you are prepared to believe me if I should find no bruise of Hell upon her.
PARRIS: It is agreed, sir-it is agreed—we will abide by your judgment.
HALE: Good then. He *goes to the bed, looks down at Betty.* To *Parris :* Now, sir, what were your first warning of this strangeness?
PARRIS: Why, sir—I discovered *her—indicating Abigail*—and my niece and ten or twelve of the other girls, dancing in the forest last night.
HALE, *surprised:* You permit dancing?
PARRIS: No, no, it were secret—
MRS. PUTNAM, *unable to wait:* Mr. Parris's slave has knowledge of conjurin', sir.
PARRIS, to *Mrs. Putnam:* We cannot be sure of that, Goody Ann—
MRS. PUTNAM, *frightened, very softly:* I know it, sir. I sent my child—she should learn from Tituba who murdered her sisters.
REBECCA, *horrified.*- Goody Ann! You sent a child to conjure up the dead?
MRS. PUTNAM: Let God blame me, not you, not you, Rebecca! I'll not have you judging me any more! *To Hale:* Is it a natural work to lose seven children before they live a day?
PARRIS: Sssh!
Rebecca, *with great pain, turns her face away. There is a pause.*
HALE: Seven dead in childbirth.
MRS. PUTNAM, *softly:* Aye. *Her voice breaks; she looks up at him. Silence. Hale is impressed. Parris looks to him. He goes to his books, opens one, turns pages, then reads. All wait, avidly.*
PARRIS, *hushed:* What book is that?
MRS. PUTNAM: What's there, sir?

HALE, *with a tasty love of intellectual pursuit:* Here is all the invisible world, caught, defined, and calculated. In these books the Devil stands stripped of all his brute disguises. Here are all your familiar spirits—your incubi and succubi; your witches that go by land, by air, and by sea; your wizards of the night and of the day. Have no fear now—we shall find him out if he has come among us, and I mean to crush him utterly if he has shown his face! *He starts for the bed.*
REBECCA: Will it hurt the child, sir?
HALE: I cannot tell. If she is truly in the Devil's grip we may have to rip and tear to get her free.
REBECCA: I think I'll go, then. I am too old for this. *She rises.*
PARRIS, *striving for conviction:* Why, Rebecca, we may open up the boil of all our troubles today!
REBECCA: Let us hope for that. I go to God for you, sir.
PARRIS, *with trepidation—and resentment:* I hope you do not mean we go to Satan here! *Slight pause.*
REBECCA: I wish I knew. *She goes out; they feel resentful of her note of moral superiority.*
PUTNAM, *abruptly:* Come, Mr. Hale, let's get on. Sit you here.
GILES: Mr. Hale, I have always wanted to ask a learned man—what signifies the readin' of strange books?
HALE: What books?
GILES: I cannot tell; she hides them.
HALE: Who does this?
GILES: Martha, my wife. I have waked at night many a time and found her in a corner, readin' of a book. Now what do you make of that?
HALE: Why, that's not necessarily—
GILES : It discomfits me! Last night—mark this—I tried and tried and could not say my prayers. And then she close her book and walks out of the house, and suddenly—mark this—I could pray again!

Old Giles must be spoken for, if only because his fate was to be so remarkable and so different from that of all the others. He was in his early

eighties at this time, and was the most comical hero in the history. No man has ever been blamed for so much. If a cow was missed, the first thought was to look for her around Corey's house; a fire blazing up at night brought suspicion of arson to his door. He didn't give a hoot for public opinion, and only in his last years—after he had married Martha—did he bother much with the church. That she stopped his prayer is very probable, but he forgot to say that he'd only recently learned any prayers and it didn't take much to make him stumble over them. He was a crank and a nuisance, but withal a deeply innocent and brave man. In court, once, he was asked if it were true that he had been frightened by the strange behavior of a hog and had then said he knew it to be the Devil in an animal's shape. "What frighted you?" he was asked. He forgot everything but the word "frighted," and instantly replied, "I do not know that I ever spoke that word in my life."

HALE: Ah! The stoppage of prayer—that is strange. I'll speak further on that with you.
GILES: I'm not sayin' she's touched the Devil, now, but I'd admire to know what books she reads and why she hides them. She'll not answer me, y' see.
HALE: Aye, we'll discuss it. To *all:* Now mark me, if the Devil is in her you will witness some frightful wonders in this room, so please to keep your wits about you. Mr. Putnam, stand close in case she flies. Now, Betty, dear, will you sit up? *Putnam comes in closer, ready—handed. Hale sits Betty up, but she hangs limp in his hands.* Hmmm. *He observes her carefully. The others watch breathlessly.* Can you hear me? I am John Hale, minister of Beverly. I have come to help you, dear. Do you remember my two little girls in Beverly? *She does not stir in his hands.*
PARRIS, in *fright:* How can it be the Devil? Why would he choose my house to strike? We have all manner of licentious people in the village!
HALE: What victory would the Devil have to win a soul already bad? It is the best the Devil wants, and who is better than the minister?
GILES: That's deep, Mr. Parris, deep, deep!
PARRIS, *with resolution now:* Betty! Answer Mr. Hale! Betty!

HALE: Does someone afflict you, child? It need not be a woman, mind you, or a man. Perhaps some bird invisible to others comes to you—perhaps a pig, a mouse, or any beast at all. Is there some figure bids you fly? *The child remains limp in his hands. In silence he lays her back on the pillow. Now, holding out his hands toward her, he intones:* In nomine Domini Sabaoth sui filiique ite ad infernos. *She does not stir. He turns to Abigail, his eyes narrowing.* Abigail, what sort of dancing were you doing with her in the forest?
ABIGAIL: Why—common dancing is all.
PARRIS: I think I ought to say that I—I saw a kettle in the grass where they were dancing.
ABIGAIL: That were only soup.
HALE: What sort of soup were in this kettle, Abigail?
ABIGAIL: Why, it were beans—and lentils, I think, and—
HALE : Mr. Parris, you did not notice, did you, any living thing in the kettle? A mouse, perhaps, a spider, a frog—?
PARRIS, *fearfully :* I—do believe there were some movement—in the soup.
ABIGAIL: That jumped in, we never put it in!
HALE, *quickly:* What jumped in?
ABIGAIL: Why, a very little frog jumped—
PARRIS: A frog, Abby!
HALE, *grasping Abigail :* Abigail, it may be your cousin is dying. Did you call the Devil last night?
ABIGAIL: I never called him! Tituba, Tituba …
PARRIS, *blanched:* She called the Devil?
HALE: I should like to speak with Tituba.
PARRIS: Goody Ann, will you bring her up? *Mrs. Putnam exits.*
HALE: How did she call him?
ABIGAIL: I know not—she spoke Barbados.
HALE: Did you feel any strangeness when she called him? A sudden cold wind, perhaps? A trembling below the ground?
ABIGAIL: I didn’t see no Devil! *Shaking Betty:* Betty, wake up. Betty! Betty!

HALE: You cannot evade me, Abigail. Did your cousin drink any of the brew in that kettle?
ABIGAIL: She never drank it!
HALE: Did you drink it?
ABIGAIL: No, sir!
HALE: Did Tituba ask you to drink it?
ABIGAIL: She tried, but I refused.
HALE: Why are you concealing? Have you sold yourself to Lucifer?
ABIGAIL: I never sold myself! I'm a good girl! I'm a proper girl!
Mrs. Putnam enters with Tituba, and instantly Abigail points at Tituba.
ABIGAIL: She made me do it! She made Betty do it!
TITUBA, *shocked and angry:* Abby!
ABIGAIL: She makes me drink blood!
PARRIS: Blood!!
MRS. PUTNAM: My baby's blood?
TITUBA: No, no, chicken blood. I give she chicken blood!
HALE: Woman, have you enlisted these children for the Devil?
TITUBA: No, no, sir, I don't truck with no Devil!
HALE: Why can she not wake? Are you silencing this child?
TITUBA: I love me Betty!
HALE: You have sent your spirit out upon this child, have you not? Are you gathering souls for the Devil?
ABIGAIL: She sends her spirit on me in church; she makes me laugh at prayer!
PARRIS: She have often laughed at prayer!
ABIGAIL: She comes to me every night to go and drink blood!
TITUBA: You beg *me* to conjure! She beg *me* make charm—
ABIGAIL : Don't lie! *To Hale:* She comes to me while I sleep; she's always making me dream corruptions!
TITUBA: Why you say that, Abby?
ABIGAIL: Sometimes I wake and find myself standing in the open doorway and not a stitch on my body! I always hear her laughing in my sleep. I hear her singing her Barbados songs and tempting me with—

TITUBA: Mister Reverend, I never—
HALE, *resolved now:* Tituba, I want you to wake this child.
TITUBA: I have no power on this child, sir.
HALE: You most certainly do, and you will free her from it now! When did you compact with the Devil?
TITUBA: I don't compact with no Devil!
PARRIS: You will confess yourself or I will take you out and whip you to your death, Tituba!
PUTNAM: This woman must be hanged! She must be taken and hanged!
TITUBA, *terrified, falls to her knees:* No, no, don't hang Tituba! I tell him I don't desire to work for him, sir.
PARRIS: The Devil?
HALE: Then you saw him! *Tituba weeps.* Now Tituba, I know that when we bind ourselves to Hell it is very hard to break with it. We are going to help you tear yourself free—
TITUBA, *frightened by the coming process:* Mister Reverend, I do believe somebody else be witchin' these children.
HALE: Who?
TITUBA: I don't know, sir, but the Devil got him numerous witches.
HALE: Does he! *It is a clue.* Tituba, look into my eyes. Come, look into me. *She raises her eyes to his fearfully.* You would be a good Christian woman, would you not, Tituba?
TITUBA: Aye, sir, a good Christian woman.
HALE: And you love these little children?
TITUBA: Oh, yes, sir, I don't desire to hurt little children.
HALE: And you love God, Tituba?
TITUBA: I love God with all my bein'.
HALE: Now, in God's holy name—
TITUBA: Bless Him. Bless Him. *She is rocking on her knees, sobbing in terror.*
HALE: And to His glory—
TITUBA: Eternal glory. Bless Him—bless God …

HALE: Open yourself, Tituba—open yourself and let God's holy light shine on you.
TITUBA: Oh, bless the Lord.
HALE: When the Devil comes to you does he ever come—with another person? *She stares up into his face.* Perhaps another person in the village? Someone you know.
PARRIS: Who came with him?
PUTNAM : Sarah Good? Did you ever see Sarah Good with him? Or Osburn?
PARRIS: Was it man or woman came with him?
TITUBA: Man or woman. Was—was woman.
PARRIS: What woman? A woman, you said. What woman?
TITUBA: It was black dark, and I—
PARRIS: You could see him, why could you not see her?
TITUBA: Well, they was always talking; they was always runnin' round and carryin' on—
PARRIS: You mean out of Salem? Salem witches?
TITUBA: I believe so, yes, sir.
Now Hale takes her hand. She is surprised.
HALE: Tituba. You must have no fear to tell us who they are, do you understand? We will protect you. The Devil can never overcome a minister. You know that, do you not?
TITUBA-She *kisses Hale's hand:* Aye, sir, oh, I do.
HALE: You have confessed yourself to witchcraft, and that speaks a wish to come to Heaven's side. And we will bless you, Tituba.
TITUBA, deeply *relieved:* Oh, God bless you, Mr. Hale!
HALE, with rising exaltation: You are God's instrument put in our hands to discover the Devil's agents among us. You are selected, Tituba, you are chosen to help us cleanse our village. So speak utterly, Tituba, turn your back on him and face God—face God, Tituba, and God will protect you.
TITUBA, *joining with him:* Oh, God, protect Tituba!
HALE, *kindly:* Who came to you with the Devil? Two? Three? Four? How many?

Tituba pants and begins rocking back and forth again, staring ahead.
TITUBA: There was four. There was four.
PARRIS, *pressing in on her:* Who? Who? Their names, their names!
TITUBA, *suddenly bursting out:* Oh, how many times he bid me kill you, Mr. Parris!
PARRIS: Kill me!
TITUBA, *in a fury:* He say Mr. Parris must be kill! Mr. Parris no goodly man, Mr. Parris mean man and no gentle man, and he bid me rise out of my bed and cut your throat! *They gasp.* But I tell him "No! I don't hate that man. I don't want kill that man." But he say, "You work for me, Tituba, and I make you free! I give you pretty dress to wear, and put you way high up in the air, and you gone fly back to Barbados!" And I say, "You lie, Devil, you lie!" And then he come one stormy night to me, and he say, "Look! I have *white* people belong to me." And I look—and there was Goody Good.
PARRIS: Sarah Good!
TITUBA, *rocking and weeping:* Aye, sir, and Goody Osburn.
MRS. PUTNAM: I knew it! Goody Osburn were midwife to me three times. I begged you, Thomas, did I not? I begged him not to call Osburn because I feared her. My babies always shriveled in her hands!
HALE: Take courage, you must give us all their names. How can you bear to see this child suffering? Look at her, Tituba. *He is indicating Betty on the bed.* Look at her God-given innocence; her soul is so tender; we must protect her, Tituba; the Devil is out and preying on her like a beast upon the flesh of the pure lamb. God will bless you for your help.
Abigail rises, staring as though inspired, and cries out.
ABIGAIL: I want to open myself! *They turn to her, startled. She is enraptured, as though in a pearly light.* I want the light of God, I want the sweet love of Jesus! I danced for the Devil; I saw him; I wrote in his book; I go back to Jesus; I kiss His hand. I saw Sarah Good with the Devil! I saw Goody Osburn with the Devil! I saw Bridget Bishop with the Devil!
As she is speaking, Betty is rising from the bed, a fever in her eyes, and picks up the chant.

BETTY, *staring too:* I saw George Jacobs with the Devil! I saw Goody Howe with the Devil!
PARRIS: She speaks! *He rushes to embrace Betty.* She speaks!
HALE: Glory to God! It is broken, they are free!
BETTY, *calling out hysterically and with great relief:* I saw Martha Bellows with the Devil!
ABIGAIL: I saw Goody Sibber with the Devil! *It is rising to a great glee.*
PUTNAM: The marshal, I'll call the marshal!
Parris is shouting a prayer of thanksgiving.
BETTY: I saw Alice Barrow with the Devil!
The curtain begins to fall.
HALE, *as Putnam goes out:* Let the marshal bring irons!
ABIGAIL: I saw Goody Hawkins with the Devil!
BETTY: I saw Goody Bibber with the Devil!
ABIGAIL: I saw Goody Booth with the Devil!
On their ecstatic cries

THE CURTAIN FALLS

ACT TWO

The common room of Proctor's house, eight days later.
At the right is a door opening on the fields outside. A fireplace is at the left, and behind it a stairway leading upstairs. It is the low, dark, and rather long living room of the time. As the curtain rises, the room is empty. From above, Elizabeth is heard softly singing to the children. Presently the door opens and John Proctor enters, carrying his gun. He glances about the room as he comes toward the fireplace, then halts for an instant as he hears her singing. He continues on to the fireplace, leans the gun against the wall as he swings a pot out of the fire and smells it. Then he lifts out the ladle and tastes. He is not quite pleased. He reaches to a cupboard, takes a pinch of salt, and drops it into the pot. As he is tasting again, her footsteps are heard on the stair. He swings the pot into the fireplace and goes to a basin and washes his hands and face. Elizabeth enters.

ELIZABETH: What keeps you so late? It's almost dark.
PROCTOR: I were planting far out to the forest edge.
ELIZABETH: Oh, you're done then.
PROCTOR: Aye, the farm is seeded. The boys asleep?
ELIZABETH: They will be soon. *And she goes to the fireplace, proceeds to ladle up stew in a dish*.
PROCTOR: Pray now for a fair summer.
ELIZABETH: Aye.
PROCTOR: Are you well today?
ELIZABETH: I am. *She brings the plate to the table, and, indicating the food:* It is a rabbit.

PROCTOR, *going to the table:* Oh, is it! In Jonathan's trap?
ELIZABETH: No, she walked into the house this afternoon; I found her sittin' in the corner like she come to visit.
PROCTOR: Oh, that's a good sign walkin' in.
ELIZABETH: Pray God. It hurt my heart to strip her, poor rabbit. *She sits and watches him taste it.*
PROCTOR: It's well seasoned.
ELIZABETH, *blushing with pleasure:* I took great care. She's tender?
PROCTOR: Aye. *He eats. She watches him.* I think we'll see green fields soon. It's warm as blood beneath the clods.
ELIZABETH: That's well.
Proctor eats, then looks up.
PROCTOR: If the crop is good I'll buy George Jacobs' heifer. How would that please you?
ELIZABETH: Aye, it would.
PROCTOR, *with a grin:* I mean to please you, Elizabeth.
ELIZABETH—*it is hard to say:* I know it, John.
He gets up, goes to her, kisses her. She receives it. With a certain disappointment, he returns to the table.
PROCTOR, *as gently as he can:* Cider?
ELIZABETH, *with a sense of reprimanding herself for having forgot :* Aye!
She gets up and goes and pours a glass for him. He now arches his back.
PROCTOR: This farm's a continent when you go foot by foot droppin' seeds in it.
ELIZABETH, *coming with the cider:* It must be.
PROCTOR, *he drinks a long draught, then, putting the glass down:* You ought to bring some flowers in the house.
ELIZABETH: Oh! I forgot! I will tomorrow.
PROCTOR: It's winter in here yet. On Sunday let you come with me, and we'll walk the farm together; I never see such a load of flowers on the earth. *With good feeling he goes and looks up at the sky through the open doorway.* Lilacs have a purple smell. Lilac is the smell of nightfall, I think. Massachusetts is a beauty in the spring!

ELIZABETH: Aye, it is.
There is a pause. She is watching him from the table as he stands there absorbing the night. It is as though she would speak but cannot. Instead, now, she takes up his plate and glass and fork and goes with them to the basin. Her back is turned to him. He turns to her and watches her. A sense of their separation, rises.
PROCTOR: I think you're sad again. Are you?
ELIZABETH—*she* doesn't want friction, and yet she must: You come so late I thought you'd gone to Salem this afternoon.
PROCTOR: Why? I have no business in Salem.
ELIZABETH: You did speak of going, earlier this week.
PROCTOR—*he knows what she means:* I thought better of it since.
ELIZABETH: Mary Warren's there today.
PROCTOR: Why'd you let her? You heard me forbid her to go to Salem any more!
ELIZABETH: I couldn't stop her.
PROCTOR, *holding back a full condemnation of her:* It is a fault, it is a fault, Elizabeth—you're the mistress here, not Mary Warren.
ELIZABETH: She frightened all my strength away.
PROCTOR: How may that mouse frighten you, Elizabeth? You—
ELIZABETH : It is a mouse no more. I forbid her go, and she raises up her chin like the daughter of a prince and says to me, "I must go to Salem, Goody Proctor; I am an official of the court!"
PROCTOR: Court! What court?
ELIZABETH: Aye, it is a proper court they have now. They've sent four judges out of Boston, she says, weighty magistrates of the General Court, and at the head sits the Deputy Governor of the Province.
PROCTOR, *astonished:* Why, she's mad.
ELIZABETH: I would to God she were. There be fourteen people in the jail now, she says. *Proctor simply looks at her, unable to grasp it.* And they'll be tried, and the court have power to hang them too, she says.
PROCTOR, *scoffing, but without conviction:* Ah, they'd never hang—

ELIZABETH : The Deputy Governor promise hangin' if they'll not confess, John. The town's gone wild, I think. She speak of Abigail, and I thought she were a saint, to hear her. Abigail brings the other girls into the court, and where she walks the crowd will part like the sea for Israel. And folks are brought before them, and if they scream and howl and fall to the floor—the person's clapped in the jail for bewitchin' them.
PROCTOR, *wide-eyed:* Oh, it is a black mischief.
ELIZABETH: I think you must go to Salem, John. *He turns to her.* I think so. You must tell them it is a fraud.
PROCTOR, *thinking beyond this:* Aye, it is, it is surely.
ELIZABETH: Let you go to Ezekiel Cheever—he knows you well. And tell him what she said to you last week in her uncle's house. She said it had naught to do with witchcraft, did she not?
PROCTOR, *in thought:* Aye, she did, she did. *Now a pause.*
ELIZABETH, *quietly, fearing to anger him by prodding:* God forbid you keep that from the court, John. I think they must be told.
PROCTOR, *quietly, struggling with his thought:* Aye, they must, they must. It is a wonder they do believe her.
ELIZABETH: I would go to Salem now, John—let you go tonight.
PROCTOR: I'll think on it.
ELIZABETH, *with her courage now:* You cannot keep it, John.
PROCTOR, *angering:* I know I cannot keep it. I say I will think on it!
ELIZABETH, *hurt, and very coldly:* Good, then, let you think on it. *She stands and starts to walk out of the room.*
PROCTOR: I am only wondering how I may prove what she told me, Elizabeth. If the girl's a saint now, I think it is not easy to prove she's fraud, and the town gone so silly. She told it to me in a room alone- have no proof for it.
ELIZABETH: You were alone with her?
PROCTOR, *stubbornly:* For a moment alone, aye.
ELIZABETH: Why, then, it is not as you told me.
PROCTOR, *his anger rising:* For a moment, I say. The others come in soon after.

ELIZABETH, *quietly—she has suddenly lost all faith in him:* Do as you wish, then. *She starts to turn.*
PROCTOR: Woman. *She turns to him.* I'll not have your suspicion any more.
ELIZABETH, *a little loftily:* I have no-
PROCTOR: I'll not have it!
ELIZABETH: Then let you not earn it.
PROCTOR, *with a violent undertone:* You doubt me yet?
ELIZABETH, *with a smile, to keep her dignity:* John, if it were not Abigail that you must go to hurt, would you falter now? I think not.
PROCTOR: Now look you—
ELIZABETH : I see what I see, John.
PROCTOR, *with solemn warning:* You will not judge me more, Elizabeth. I have good reason to think before I charge fraud on Abigail, and I will think on it. Let you look to your own improvement before you go to judge your husband any more. I have forgot Abigail, and—
ELIZABETH : And I.
PROCTOR: Spare me! You forget nothin' and forgive nothin'. Learn charity, woman. I have gone tiptoe in this house all seven month since she is gone. I have not moved from there to there without I think to please you, and still an everlasting funeral marches round your heart. I cannot speak but I am doubted, every moment judged for lies, as though I come into a court when I come into this house!
ELIZABETH: John, you are not open with me. You saw her with a crowd, you said. Now you—
PROCTOR : I'll plead my honesty no more, Elizabeth.
ELIZABETH—*now she would justify herself:* John, I am only—
PROCTOR: No more! I should have roared you down when first you told me your suspicion. But I wilted, and, like a Christian, I confessed. Confessed! Some dream I had must have mistaken you for God that day. But you're not, you're not, and let you remember it! Let you look sometimes for the goodness in me, and judge me not.

ELIZABETH: I do not judge you. The magistrate sits in your heart that judges you. I never thought you but a good man, John—*with a smile*— only somewhat bewildered.
PROCTOR, *laughing bitterly:* Oh, Elizabeth, your justice would freeze beer! *He turns suddenly toward a sound outside. He starts for the door as Mary Warren enters. As soon as he sees her, he goes directly to her and grabs her by her cloak, furious.* How do you go to Salem when I forbid it? Do you mock me? *Shaking her:* I'll whip you if you dare leave this house again!
Strangely, she doesn't resist him but hangs limply by his grip.
MARY WARREN: I am sick, I am sick, Mr. Proctor. Pray, pray, hurt me not. *Her strangeness throws him off, and her evident pallor and weakness. He frees her.* My insides are all shuddery; I am in the proceedings all day, sir.
PROCTOR, *with draining anger—his curiosity is draining it:* And what of these proceedings here? When will you proceed to keep this house, as you are paid nine pound a year to do—and my wife not wholly well?
As though to compensate, Mary Warren goes to Elizabeth with a small rag doll.
MARY WARREN: I made a gift for you today, Goody Proctor. I had to sit long hours in a chair, and passed the time with sewing.
ELIZABETH, *perplexed, looking at the doll:* Why, thank you, it's a fair poppet.
MARY WARREN, *with a trembling, decayed voice:* We must all love each other now, Goody Proctor.
ELIZABETH, *amazed at her strangeness:* Aye, indeed, we must.
MARY WARREN, *glancing at the room:* I'll get up early in the morning and clean the house. I must sleep now. *She turns and starts Off*
PROCTOR: Mary. *She halts.* Is it true? There be fourteen women arrested?
MARY WARREN: No, sir. There be thirty-nine now—*She suddenly breaks off and sobs and sits down, exhausted.*
ELIZABETH: Why, she's weepin'! What ails you, child?

MARY WARREN: Goody Osburn—will hang! *There is a shocked pause, while she sobs.*
PROCTOR: Hang! *He calls into her face.* Hang, y'say?
MARY WARREN, *through her weeping:* Aye.
PROCTOR: The Deputy Governor will permit it?
MARY WARREN: He sentenced her. He must. *To ameliorate it:* But not Sarah Good. For Sarah Good confessed, y'see.
PROCTOR: Confessed! To what?
MARY WARREN: That she—in *horror at the memory—she* sometimes made a compact with Lucifer, and wrote her name in his black book—with her blood—and bound herself to torment Christians till God's thrown down—and we all must worship Hell forevermore.
Pause.
PROCTOR: But—surely you know what a jabberer she is. Did you tell them that?
MARY WARREN: Mr. Proctor, in open court she near to choked us all to death.
PROCTOR: How, choked you?
MARY WARREN: She sent her spirit out.
ELIZABETH : Oh, Mary, Mary, surely you—
MARY WARREN, *with an indignant edge:* She tried to kill me many times, Goody Proctor!
ELIZABETH: Why, I never heard you mention that before.
MARY WARREN: I never knew it before. I never knew anything before. When she come into the court I say to myself, I must not accuse this woman, for she sleep in ditches, and so very old and poor. But then—then she sit there, denying and denying, and I feel a misty coldness climbin' up my back, and the skin on my skull begin to creep, and I feel a clamp around my neck and I cannot breathe air; and *then—entranced—I* hear a voice, a screamin' voice, and it were my voice—and all at once I remember everything she done to me!
PROCTOR: Why? What did she do to you?

MARY WARREN, *like one awakened to a marvelous secret insight:* So many time, Mr. Proctor, she come to this very door, beggin' bread and a cup of cider—and mark this: whenever I turned her away empty, she *mumbled.*
ELIZABETH: Mumbled! She may mumble if she's hungry.
MARY WARREN: But *what* does she mumble? You must remember, Goody Proctor. Last month—a Monday, I think—she walked away, and I thought my guts would burst for two days after. Do you remember it?
ELIZABETH: Why—I do, I think, but—
MARY WARREN: And so I told that to Judge Hathorne, and he asks her so. "Goody Osburn," says he, "what curse do you mumble that this girl must fall sick after turning you away?" And then she *replies-mimicking an old crone*—"Why, your excellence, no curse at all. I only say my commandments; I hope I may say my commandments," says she!
ELIZABETH: And that's an upright answer.
MARY WARREN: Aye, but then Judge Hathorne say, "Recite for us your commandments!"—*leaningavidly toward them—and* of all the ten she could not say a single one. She never knew no commandments, and they had her in a flat lie!
PROCTOR: And so condemned her?
MARY WARREN, *now a little strained, seeing his stubborn doubt:* Why, they must when she condemned herself.
PROCTOR: But the proof, the proof!
MARY WARREN, *with greater impatience with him:* I told you the proof. It's hard proof, hard as rock, the judges said.
PROCTOR—*he pauses an instant, then:* You will not go to court again, Mary Warren.
MARY WARREN: I must tell you, sir, I will be gone every day now. I am amazed you do not see what weighty work we do.
PROCTOR: What work you do! It's strange work for a Christian girl to hang old women!
MARY WARREN: But, Mr. Proctor, they will not hang them if they confess. Sarah Good will only sit in jail some *time—recalling*— and here's a wonder for you; think on this. Goody Good is pregnant!

ELIZABETH: Pregnant! Are they mad? The woman's near to sixty!
MARY WARREN: They had Doctor Griggs examine her, and she's full to the brim. And smokin' a pipe all these years, and no husband either! But she's safe, thank God, for they'll not hurt the innocent child. But be that not a marvel? You must see it, sir, it's God's work we do. So I'll be gone every day for some time. I'm—I am an official of the court, they say, and I—*She has been edging toward offstage.*
PROCTOR: I'll official you! *He strides to the mantel, takes down the whip hanging there.*
MARY WARREN, *terrified, but coming erect, striving for her authority:* I'll not stand whipping any more!
ELIZABETH, *hurriedly, as Proctor approaches:* Mary, promise now you'll stay at home—
MARY WARREN, *backing from him, but keeping her erect posture, striving, striving for her way:* The Devil's loose in Salem, Mr. Proctor; we must discover where he's hiding!
PROCTOR: I'll whip the Devil out of you! *With whip raised he reaches out for her, and she streaks away and yells.*
MARY WARREN, *pointing at Elizabeth:* I saved her life today!
Silence. His whip comes down.
ELIZABETH, *softly:* I am accused?
MARY WARREN, *quaking:* Somewhat mentioned. But I said I never see no sign you ever sent your spirit out to hurt no one, and seeing I do live so closely with you, they dismissed it.
ELIZABETH: Who accused me?
MARY WARREN: I am bound by law, I cannot tell it. To Proctor: I only hope you'll not be so sarcastical no more. Four judges and the King's deputy sat to dinner with us but an hour ago. I —I would have you speak civilly to me, from this out.
PROCTOR, *in horror, muttering in disgust at her:* Go to bed.
MARY WARREN, *with* a *stamp of her foot:* I'll not be ordered to bed no more, Mr. Proctor! I am eighteen and a woman, however single!
PROCTOR: Do you wish to sit up? Then sit up.

MARY WARREN: I wish to go to bed!
PROCTOR, *in anger:* Good night, then!
MARY WARREN: Good night. *Dissatisfied, uncertain of herself, she* goes out. *Wide-eyed, both Proctor and Elizabeth stand staring.*
ELIZABETH, *quietly:* Oh, the noose, the noose is up!
PROCTOR: There'll be no noose.
ELIZABETH: She wants me dead. I knew all week it would come to this!
PROCTOR, *without conviction:* They dismissed it. You heard her say—
ELIZABETH : And what of tomorrow? She will cry me out until they take me!
PROCTOR: Sit you down.
ELIZABETH: She wants me dead, John, you know it!
PROCTOR: I say sit down! *She sits, trembling. He speaks quietly, trying to keep his wits.* Now we must be wise, Elizabeth.
ELIZABETH, *with sarcasm, and a sense of being lost:* Oh, indeed, indeed!
PROCTOR: Fear nothing. I'll find Ezekiel Cheever. I'll tell him she said it were all sport.
ELIZABETH: John, with so many in the jail, more than Cheever's help is needed now, I think. Would you favor me with this? Go to Abigail.
PROCTOR, *his soul hardening as he senses ... :* What have I to say to Abigail?
ELIZABETH, *delicately:* John—grant me this. You have a faulty understanding of young girls. There is a promise made in any bed—
PROCTOR, *striving against his anger:* What promise!
ELIZABETH: Spoke or silent, a promise is surely made. And she may dote on it now—I am sure she does—and thinks to kill me, then to take my place.
Proctor's anger is rising; he cannot speak.
ELIZABETH: It is her dearest hope, John, I know it. There be a thousand names; why does she call mine? There be a certain danger in calling such a name—I am no Goody Good that sleeps in ditches, nor Osburn, drunk and half-witted. She'd dare not call out such a farmer's wife but there be monstrous profit in it. She thinks to take my place, John.

PROCTOR: She cannot think it! *He knows it is true.*
ELIZABETH, *"reasonably":* John, have you ever shown her somewhat of contempt? She cannot pass you in the church but you will blush—
PROCTOR : I may blush for my sin.
ELIZABETH: I think she sees another meaning in that blush.
PROCTOR: And what see you? What see you, Elizabeth?
ELIZABETH, *"conceding":* I think you be somewhat ashamed, for I am there, and she so close.
PROCTOR: When will you know me, woman? Were I stone I would have cracked for shame this seven month!
ELIZABETH: Then go and tell her she's a whore. Whatever promise she may sense—break it, John, break it.
PROCTOR, *between his teeth:* Good, then. I'll go. *He starts for his rifle.*
ELIZABETH, *trembling, fearfully:* Oh, how unwillingly!
PROCTOR, *turning on her, rifle in hand:* I will curse her hotter than the oldest cinder in hell. But pray, begrudge me not my anger!
ELIZABETH: Your anger! I only ask you—
PROCTOR : Woman, am I so base? Do you truly think me base?
ELIZABETH: I never called you base.
PROCTOR: Then how do you charge me with such a promise? The promise that a stallion gives a mare I gave that girl!
ELIZABETH: Then why do you anger with me when I bid you break it?
PROCTOR: Because it speaks deceit, and I am honest! But I'll plead no more! I see now your spirit twists around the single error of my life, and I will never tear it free!
ELIZABETH, crying out: You'll tear it free—when you come to know that I will be your only wife, or no wife at all! She has an arrow in you yet, John Proctor, and you know it well!
Quite suddenly, as though from the air, a figure appears in the doorway. They start slightly. It is Mr. Hale. He is different now—drawn a little, and there is a quality of deference, even of guilt, about his manner now.
HALE: Good evening.

PROCTOR, *still in his shock:* Why, Mr. Hale! Good evening to you, sir. Come in, come in.
HALE, to *Elizabeth:* I hope I do not startle you.
ELIZABETH: No, no, it's only that I heard no horse—
HALE: You are Goodwife Proctor.
PROCTOR: Aye; Elizabeth.
HALE, *nods, then:* I hope you're not off to bed yet.
PROCTOR, *setting down his gun:* No, *no. Hale comes further into the room. And Proctor, to explain his nervousness:* We are not used to visitors after dark, but you're welcome here. Will you sit you down, sir?
HALE: I will. *He sits.* Let you sit, Goodwife Proctor.
She does, never letting him out of her sight. There is a pause as Hale looks about the room.
PROCTOR, to *break the silence:* Will you drink cider, Mr. Hale?
HALE: No, it rebels my stomach; I have some further traveling yet tonight. Sit you down, sir. *Proctor sits.* I will not keep you long, but I have some business with you.
PROCTOR: Business of the court?
HALE: No—no, I come of my own, without the court's authority. Hear me. *He wets his lips.* I know not if you are aware, but your wife's name is—mentioned in the court.
PROCTOR: We know it, sir. Our Mary Warren told us. We are entirely amazed.
HALE: I am a stranger here, as you know. And in my ignorance I find it hard to draw a clear opinion of them that come accused before the court. And so this afternoon, and now tonight, I go from house to house—I come now from Rebecca Nurse's house and—
ELIZABETH, *shocked:* Rebecca's charged!
HALE: God forbid such a one be charged. She is, however—mentioned somewhat.
ELIZABETH, *with an attempt at a laugh:* You will never believe, I hope, that Rebecca trafficked with the Devil.
HALE: Woman, it is possible.

PROCTOR, *taken aback:* Surely you cannot think so.
HALE: This is a strange time, Mister. No man may longer doubt the powers of the dark are gathered in monstrous attack upon this village. There is too much evidence now to deny it. You will agree, sir?
PROCTOR, *evading:* I—have no knowledge in that line. But it's hard to think so pious a woman be secretly a Devil's bitch after seventy year of such good prayer.
HALE: Aye. But the Devil is a wily one, you cannot deny it. However, she is far from accused, and I know she will not be. *Pause.* I thought, sir, to put some questions as to the Christian character of this house, if you'll permit me.
PROCTOR, *coldly, resentful:* Why, we—have no fear of questions, sir.
HALE: Good, then. *He makes himself more comfortable.* In the book of record that Mr. Parris keeps, I note that you are rarely in the church on Sabbath Day.
PROCTOR: No, sir, you are mistaken.
HALE: Twenty-six time in seventeen month, sir. I must call that rare. Will you tell me why you are so absent?
PROCTOR: Mr. Hale, I never knew I must account to that man for I come to church or stay at home. My wife were sick this winter.
HALE: So I am told. But you, Mister, why could you not come alone?
PROCTOR: I surely did come when I could, and when I could not I prayed in this house.
HALE: Mr. Proctor, your house is not a church; your theology must tell you that.
PROCTOR: It does, sir, it does; and it tells me that a minister may pray to God without he have golden candlesticks upon the altar.
HALE: What golden candlesticks?
PROCTOR: Since we built the church there were pewter candlesticks upon the altar; Francis Nurse made them, y'know, and a sweeter hand never touched the metal. But Parris came, and for twenty week he preach nothin' but golden candlesticks until he had them. I labor the earth from dawn of day to blink of night, and I tell you true, when I look to heaven and see my

money glaring at his elbows—it hurt my prayer, sir, it hurt my prayer. I think, sometimes, the man dreams cathedrals, not clapboard meetin' houses.
HALE, *thinks, then:* And yet, Mister, a Christian on Sabbath Day must be in church. *Pause.* Tell me—you have three children?
PROCTOR: Aye. Boys.
HALE: How comes it that only two are baptized?
PROCTOR, *starts to speak, then stops, then, as though unable to restrain this:* I like it not that Mr. Parris should lay his hand upon my baby. I see no light of God in that man. I'll not conceal it.
HALE: I must say it, Mr. Proctor; that is not for you to decide. The man's ordained, therefore the light of God is in him.
PROCTOR, *flushed with resentment but trying to smile:* What's your suspicion, Mr. Hale?
HALE: No, no, I have no—
PROCTOR: I nailed the roof upon the church, I hung the door—
HALE: Oh, did you! That's a good sign, then.
PROCTOR: It may be I have been too quick to bring the man to book, but you cannot think we ever desired the destruction of religion. I think that's in your mind, is it not?
HALE, *not altogether giving way:* I—have—there is a softness in your record, sir, a softness.
ELIZABETH: I think, maybe, we have been too hard with Mr. Parris. I think so. But sure we never loved the Devil here.
HALE, *nods, deliberating this. Then, with the voice of one administering a secret test:* Do you know your Commandments, Elizabeth?
ELIZABETH, *without hesitation, even eagerly:* I surely do. There be no mark of blame upon my life, Mr. Hale. I am a covenanted Christian woman.
HALE: And you, Mister?
PROCTOR, *a trifle unsteadily:* I—am sure I do, sir.
HALE, *glances at her open face, then at John, then:* Let you repeat them, if you will.
PROCTOR: The Commandments.
HALE: Aye.

PROCTOR, *looking off, beginning to sweat:* Thou shalt not kill.
HALE: Aye.
PROCTOR, *counting on his fingers:* Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods, nor make unto thee any graven image. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord in vain; thou shalt have no other gods before me. *With some hesitation:* Thou shalt remember the Sabbath Day and keep it holy. Pause. *Then:* Thou shalt honor thy father and mother. Thou shalt not bear false witness. *He is stuck. He counts back on his fingers, knowing one is missing.* Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image.
HALE: You have said that twice, sir.
PROCTOR, *lost:* Aye. He is flailing for it.
ELIZABETH, *delicately:* Adultery, John.
PROCTOR, *as though a secret arrow had pained his heart:* Aye. *Trying to grin it away—to Hale:* You see, sir, between the two of us we do know them all. *Hale only looks at Proctor, deep in his attempt to define this man. Proctor grows more uneasy.* I think it be a small fault.
HALE: Theology, sir, is a fortress; no crack in a fortress may be accounted small. *He rises; he seems worried now. He paces a little, in deep thought.*
PROCTOR: There be no love for Satan in this house, Mister.
HALE: I pray it, I pray it dearly. *He looks to both of them, an attempt at a smile on his face, but his misgivings are clear.* Well, then—I'll bid you good night.
ELIZABETH, *unable to restrain herself:* Mr. Hale. *He turns.* I do think you are suspecting me somewhat? Are you not?
HALE, *obviously disturbed—and evasive:* Goody Proctor, I do not judge you. My duty is to add what I may to the godly wisdom of the court. I pray you both good health and good fortune. *To John:* Good night, sir. *He starts out.*
ELIZABETH, *with a note of desperation:* I think you must tell him, John.
HALE: What's that?
ELIZABETH, *restraining a call:* Will you tell him?
Slight pause. Hale looks questioningly at John.

PROCTOR, *with difficulty:* I—I have no witness and cannot prove it, except my word be taken. But I know the children's sickness had naught to do with witchcraft.
HALE, *stopped, struck:* Naught to do—?
PROCTOR: Mr. Parris discovered them sportin' in the woods. They were startled and took sick.
Pause.
HALE: Who told you this?
PROCTOR, *hesitates, then:* Abigail Williams.
HALE: Abigail!
PROCTOR: Aye.
HALE, *his* eyes *wide:* Abigail Williams told you it had naught to do with witchcraft!
PROCTOR: She told me the day you came, sir.
HALE, *suspiciously:* Why—why did you keep this?
PROCTOR: I never knew until tonight that the world is gone daft with this nonsense.
HALE: Nonsense! Mister, I have myself examined Tituba, Sarah Good, and numerous others that have confessed to dealing with the Devil. They have *confessed* it.
PROCTOR: And why not, if they must hang for denyin' it? There are them that will swear to anything before they'll hang; have you never thought of that?
HALE: I have. I—I have indeed. *It is his own suspicion, but he resists it. He glances at Elizabeth, then at John.* And you—would you testify to this in court?
PROCTOR: I—had not reckoned with goin' into court. But if I must I will.
HALE: Do you falter here?
PROCTOR: I falter nothing, but I may wonder if my story will be credited in such a court. I do wonder on it, when such a steady-minded minister as you will suspicion such a woman that never lied, and cannot, and the world knows she cannot! I may falter somewhat, Mister; I am no fool.

HALE, *quietly—it has impressed him:* Proctor, let you open with me now, for I have a rumor that troubles me. It's said you hold no belief that there may even be witches in the world. Is that true, sir?
PROCTOR—*he knows this is critical, and is striving against his disgust with Hale and with himself for even answering:* I know not what I have said, I may have said it. I have wondered if there be witches in the world—although I cannot believe they come among us now.
HALE: Then you do not believe—
PROCTOR: I have no knowledge of it; the Bible speaks of witches, and I will not deny them.
HALE: And you, woman?
ELIZABETH: I—I cannot believe it.
HALE, *shocked:* You cannot!
PROCTOR: Elizabeth, you bewilder him!
ELIZABETH, *to Hale:* I cannot think the Devil may own a woman's soul, Mr. Hale, when she keeps an upright way, as I have. I am a good woman, I know it; and if you believe I may do only good work in the world, and yet be secretly bound to Satan, then I must tell you, sir, I do not believe it.
HALE: But, woman, you do believe there are witches in—
ELIZABETH: If you think that I am one, then I say there are none.
HALE: You surely do not fly against the Gospel, the Gospel—
PROCTOR: She believe in the Gospel, every word!
ELIZABETH: Question Abigail Williams about the Gospel, not myself!
Hale stares at her.
PROCTOR: She do not mean to doubt the Gospel, sir, you cannot think it. This be a Christian house, sir, a Christian house.
HALE: God keep you both; let the third child be quickly baptized, and go you without fail each Sunday in to Sabbath prayer; and keep a solemn, quiet way among you. I think—
Giles Corey appears in doorway.
GILES: John!
PROCTOR: Giles! What's the matter?
GILES: They take my wife.

Francis Nurse enters.
GILES: And his Rebecca!
PROCTOR, *to Francis:* Rebecca's in the *jail!*
FRANCIS: Aye, Cheever come and take her in his wagon. We've only now come from the jail, and they'll not even let us in to see them.
ELIZABETH: They've surely gone wild now, Mr. Hale!
FRANCIS, *going to Hale:* Reverend Hale! Can you not speak to the Deputy Governor? I'm sure he mistakes these people—
HALE: Pray calm yourself, Mr. Nurse.
FRANCIS: My wife is the very brick and mortar of the church, Mr. Hale—*indicating Giles*—and Martha Corey, there cannot be a woman closer yet to God than Martha.
HALE: How is Rebecca charged, Mr. Nurse?
FRANCIS, *with a mocking, half—hearted laugh:* For murder, she's charged! *Mockingly quoting the warrant:* "For the marvelous and supernatural murder of Goody Putnam's babies." What am I to do, Mr. Hale?
HALE, *turns from Francis, deeply troubled, then:* Believe me, Mr. Nurse, if Rebecca Nurse be tainted, then nothing's left to stop the whole green world from burning. Let you rest upon the justice of the court; the court will send her home, I know it.
FRANCIS : You cannot mean she will be tried in court!
HALE, *pleading:* Nurse, though our hearts break, we cannot flinch; these are new times, sir. There is a misty plot afoot so subtle we should be criminal to cling to old respects and ancient friendships. I have seen too many frightful proofs in court—the Devil is alive in Salem, and we dare not quail to follow wherever the accusing finger points!
PROCTOR, *angered:* How may such a woman murder children?
HALE, *in great pain:* Man, remember, until an hour before the Devil fell, God thought him beautiful in Heaven.
GILES: I never said my wife were a witch, Mr. Hale; I only said she were reading books!
HALE: Mr. Corey, exactly what complaint were made on your wife?

GILES: That bloody mongrel Walcott charge her. Y'see, he buy a pig of my wife four or five year ago, and the pig died soon after. So he come dancin' in for his money back. So my Martha, she says to him, "Walcott, if you haven't the wit to feed a pig properly, you'll not live to own many," she says. Now he goes to court and claims that from that day to this he cannot keep a pig alive for more than four weeks because my Martha bewitch them with her books!

Enter Ezekiel Cheever. A shocked silence.

CHEEVER: Good evening to you, Proctor.

PROCTOR: Why, Mr. Cheever. Good evening.

CHEEVER: Good evening, all. Good evening, Mr. Hale.

PROCTOR: I hope you come not on business of the court.

CHEEVER: I do, Proctor, aye. I am clerk of the court now, y'know.

Enter Marshal Herrick, a man in his early thirties, who is somewhat shamefaced at the moment.

GILES: It's a pity, Ezekiel, that an honest tailor might have gone to Heaven must burn in Hell. You'll burn for this, do you know it?

CHEEVER: You know yourself I must do as I'm told. You surely know that, Giles. And I'd as lief you'd not be sending me to Hell. I like not the sound of it, I tell you; I like not the sound of it. *He fears Proctor, but starts to reach inside his coat.* Now believe me, Proctor, how heavy be the law, all its tonnage I do carry on my back tonight. *He takes out a warrant.* I have a warrant for your wife.

PROCTOR, *to Hale:* You said she were not charged!

HALE: I know nothin' of it. *To Cheever:* When were she charged?

CHEEVER: I am given sixteen warrant tonight, sir, and she is one.

PROCTOR: Who charged her?

CHEEVER: Why, Abigail Williams charge her.

PROCTOR: On what proof, what proof?

CHEEVER, *looking about the room:* Mr. Proctor, I have little time. The court bid me search your house, but I like not to search a house. So will you hand me any poppets that your wife may keep here?

PROCTOR: Poppets?

ELIZABETH: I never kept no poppets, not since I were a girl.
CHEEVER, *embarrassed, glancing toward the mantel where sits Mary Warren's poppet:* I spy a poppet, Goody Proctor.
ELIZABETH: Oh! *Going for it:* Why, this is Mary's.
CHEEVER, *shyly:* Would you please to give it to me?
ELIZABETH, *handing it to him, asks Hale:* Has the court discovered a text in poppets now?
CHEEVER, *carefully holding the poppet:* Do you keep any others in this house?
PROCTOR: No, nor this one either till tonight. What signifies a poppet?
CHEEVER: Why, a poppet—*he gingerly turns the poppet over*—a poppet may signify—Now, woman, will you please to come with me?
PROCTOR: She will not! *To Elizabeth:* Fetch Mary here.
CHEEVER, *ineptly reaching toward Elizabeth:* No, no, I am forbid to leave her from my sight.
PROCTOR, *pushing his arm away:* You'll leave her out of sight and out of mind, Mister. Fetch Mary, Elizabeth. *Elizabeth goes upstairs.*
HALE: What signifies a poppet, Mr. Cheever?
CHEEVER, *turning the poppet over in his hands:* Why, they say it may signify that she—*He has lifted the poppet's skirt, and his eyes widen in astonished fear.* Why, this, this—
PROCTOR, *reaching for the poppet:* What's there?
CHEEVER: Why—*h*e draws *out a long needle from the poppet*—it is a needle! Herrick, Herrick, it is a needle!
Herrick comes toward him.
PROCTOR, *angrily, bewildered:* And what signifies a needle!
CHEEVER, *his hands shaking:* Why, this go hard with her, Proctor, this—I had my doubts, Proctor, I had my doubts, but here's calamity. *To Hale, showing the needle:* You see it, sir, it is a needle!
HALE: Why? What meanin' has it?
CHEEVER, *wide-eyed, trembling:* The girl, the Williams girl, Abigail Williams, sir. She sat to dinner in Reverend Parris's house tonight, and without word nor warnin' she falls to the floor. Like a struck beast, he says,

and screamed a scream that a bull would weep to hear. And he goes to save her, and, stuck two inches in the flesh of her belly, he draw a needle out. And demandin' of her how she come to be so stabbed, she—to *Proctor now* —testify it were your wife's familiar spirit pushed it in.

PROCTOR: Why, she done it herself! *To Hale:* I hope you're not takin' this for proof, Mister!

Hale, struck by the proof, is silent.

CHEEVER: 'Tis hard proof! *To Hale:* I find here a poppet Goody Proctor keeps. I have found it, sir. And in the belly of the poppet a needle's stuck. I tell you true, Proctor, I never warranted to see such proof of Hell, and I bid you obstruct me not, for I—

Enter Elizabeth with Mary Warren. Proctor, seeing Mary Warren, draws her by the arm to Hale.

PROCTOR: Here now! Mary, how did this poppet come into my house?

MARY WARREN, *frightened for herself, her voice very small:* What poppet's that, sir?

PROCTOR, *impatiently, pointing at the doll in Cheever's hand:* This poppet, this poppet.

MARY WARREN, *evasively, looking at it:* Why, I—I think it is mine.

PROCTOR: It is your poppet, is it not?

MARY WARREN, *not understanding the direction of this:* It—is, sir.

PROCTOR: And how did it come into this house?

MARY WARREN, *glancing about at the avid faces:* Why—I made it in the court, sir, and—give it to Goody Proctor tonight.

PROCTOR, *to Hale:* Now, sir—do you have it?

HALE: Mary Warren, a needle have been found inside this poppet.

MARY WARREN, *bewildered:* Why, I meant no harm by it, sir.

PROCTOR, *quickly:* You stuck that needle in yourself?

MARY WARREN: I—I believe I did, sir, I—

PROCTOR, *to Hale:* What say you now?

HALE, *watching Mary Warren closely:* Child, you are certain this be your natural memory? May it be, perhaps, that someone conjures you even now to say this?

MARY WARREN: Conjures me? Why, no, sir, I am entirely myself, I think. Let you ask Susanna Walcott—she saw me sewin' it in court. Or better *still:* Ask Abby, Abby sat beside me when I made it.
PROCTOR, *to Hale, of Cheever:* Bid him begone. Your mind is surely settled now. Bid him out, Mr. Hale.
ELIZABETH: What signifies a needle?
HALE: Mary—you charge a cold and cruel murder on Abigail.
MARY WARREN: Murder! I charge no—
HALE: Abigail were stabbed tonight; a needle were found stuck into her belly—
ELIZABETH: And she charges me?
HALE: Aye.
ELIZABETH, *her breath knocked out:* Why—! The girl is murder! She must be ripped out of the world!
CHEEVER, *pointing at Elizabeth:* You've heard that, sir! Ripped out of the world! Herrick, you heard it!
PROCTOR, *suddenly snatching the warrant out of Cheever's hands:* Out with you.
CHEEVER: Proctor, you dare not touch the warrant.
PROCTOR, *ripping the warrant:* Out with you!
CHEEVER: You've ripped the Deputy Governor's warrant, man!
PROCTOR: Damn the Deputy Governor! Out of my house!
HALE: Now, Proctor, Proctor!
PROCTOR: Get y'gone with them! You are a broken minister.
HALE: Proctor, if she is innocent, the court—
PROCTOR: If *she* is innocent! Why do you never wonder if Parris be innocent, or Abigail? Is the accuser always holy now? Were they born this morning as clean as God's fingers? I'll tell you what's walking Salem—vengeance is walking Salem. We are what we always were in Salem, but now the little crazy children are jangling the keys of the kingdom, and common vengeance writes the law! This warrant's vengeance! I'll not give my wife to vengeance!
ELIZABETH: I'll go, John—

PROCTOR: You will not go!
HERRICK: I have nine men outside. You cannot keep her. The law binds me, John, I cannot budge.
PROCTOR, *to Hale, ready to break him:* Will you see her taken?
HALE: Proctor, the court is just—
PROCTOR: Pontius Pilate! God will not let you wash your hands of this!
ELIZABETH: John—I think I must go with them. *He cannot bear to look at her.* Mary, there is bread enough for the morning; you will bake, in the afternoon. Help Mr. Proctor as you were his daughter—you owe me that, and much more. *She is fighting her weeping.* To *Proctor:* When the children wake, speak nothing of witchcraft—it will frighten them. *She cannot go on.*
PROCTOR: I will bring you home. I will bring you soon.
ELIZABETH: Oh, John, bring me soon!
PROCTOR: I will fall like an ocean on that court! Fear nothing, Elizabeth.
ELIZABETH, *with great fear:* I will fear nothing. *She looks about the room, as though to fix it in her mind.* Tell the children I have gone to visit someone sick.
She walks out the door, Herrick and Cheever behind her. For a moment, Proctor watches from the doorway. The clank of chain is heard.
PROCTOR: Herrick! Herrick, don't chain her! *He rushes out the door. From outside:* Damn you, man, you will not chain her! Off with them! I'll not have it! I will not have her chained!
There are other men's voices against his. Hale, in a fever of guilt and uncertainty, turns from the door to avoid the sight; Mary Warren bursts into tears and sits weeping. Giles Corey calls to Hale.
GILES: And yet silent, minister? It is fraud,. you know it is fraud! What keeps you, man?
Proctor is half braced, half pushed into the room by two deputies and Herrick.
PROCTOR: I'll pay you, Herrick, I will surely pay you!
HERRICK, *panting:* In God's name, John, I cannot help myself. I must chain them all. Now let you keep inside this house till I am gone! *He goes out with his deputies.*

Proctor stands there, gulping air. Horses and a wagon creaking are heard.
HALE, *in great uncertainty:* Mr. Proctor—
PROCTOR: Out of my sight!
HALE: Charity, Proctor, charity. What I have heard in her favor, I will not fear to testify in court. God help me, I cannot judge her guilty or Innocent—I know not. Only this consider: the world goes mad, and it profit nothing you should lay the cause to the vengeance of a little girl.
PROCTOR: You are a coward! Though you be ordained in God's own tears, you are a coward now!
HALE: Proctor, I cannot think God be provoked so grandly by such a petty cause. The jails are packed—our greatest judges sit in Salem now—and hangin's promised. Man, we must look to cause proportionate. Were there murder done, perhaps, and never brought to light? Abomination? Some secret blasphemy that stinks to Heaven? Think on cause, man, and let you help me to discover it. For there's your way, believe it, there is your only way, when such confusion strikes upon the world. *He goes* to *Giles and Francis.* Let you counsel among yourselves; think on your village and what may have drawn from heaven such thundering wrath upon you all. I shall pray God open up our eyes.
Hale goes out.
FRANCIS, *struck by Hale's mood:* I never heard no murder done in Salem.
PROCTOR—*he has been reached by Hale's words:* Leave me, Francis, leave me.
GILES, *shaken:* John—tell me, are we lost?
PROCTOR: Go home now, Giles. We'll speak on it tomorrow.
GILES: Let you think on it. We'll come early, eh?
PROCTOR: Aye. Go now, Giles.
GILES: Good night, then.
Giles Corey and Francis Nurse go out. After a moment:
MARY WARREN, *in a fearful squeak of a voice:* Mr. Proctor, very likely they'll let her come home once they're given proper evidence.
PROCTOR: You're coming to the court with me, Mary. You will tell it in the court.

MARY WARREN: I cannot charge murder on Abigail.
PROCTOR, *moving menacingly toward her:* You will tell the court how that poppet come here and who stuck the needle in.
MARY WARREN: She'll kill me for sayin' that! *Proctor continues toward her.* Abby'll charge lechery on you, Mr. Proctor!
PROCTOR, *halting:* She's told you!
MARY WARREN: I have known it, sir. She'll ruin you with it, I know she will.
PROCTOR, *hesitating, and with deep hatred of himself:* Good. Then her saintliness is done with. *Mary backs from him.* We will slide together into our pit; you will tell the court what you know.
MARY WARREN, in terror: I cannot, they'll turn on me—
Proctor strides and catches her, and she is repeating, "I cannot, I cannot!"
PROCTOR: My wife will never die for me! I will bring your guts into your mouth but that goodness will not die for me!
MARY WARREN, *struggling to escape him:* I cannot do it, I cannot!
PROCTOR, *grasping her by the throat as though he would strangle her:* Make your peace with it! Now Hell and Heaven grapple on our backs, and all our old pretense is ripped away—make your peace! *He throws her to the floor, where she sobs, "I cannot, I cannot ..." And now, half to himself, staring, and turning to the open door:* Peace. It is a providence, and no great change; we are only what we always were, but naked now. *He walks as though toward a great horror, facing the open sky.* Aye, naked! And the wind, God's icy wind, will blow!
And she is over and over again sobbing, "I cannot, I cannot, I *cannot," as*

THE CURTAIN FALLS[1]

ACT THREE

The vestry room of the Salem meeting house, now serving as the anteroom of the General Court.
As the curtain rises, the room is empty, but for sunlight pouring through two high windows in the back wall. The room is solemn, even forbidding. Heavy beams jut out, boards of random widths make up the walls. At the right are two doors leading into the meeting house proper, where the court is being held. At the left another door leads outside.
There is a plain bench at the left, and another at the right. In the center a rather long meeting table, with stools and a considerable armchair snugged up to it.
Through the partitioning wall at the right we hear a prosecutor's voice, Judge Hathorne's, asking a question; then a woman's voice, Martha Corey's, replying.

HATHORNE'S VOICE: Now, Martha Corey, there is abundant evidence in our hands to show that you have given yourself to the reading of fortunes. Do you deny it?
MARTHA COREY'S VOICE: I am innocent to a witch. I know not what a witch is.
HATHORNE'S VOICE: How do you know, then, that you are not a witch?
MARTHA COREY'S VOICE: If I were, I would know it.
HATHORNE'S VOICE: Why do you hurt these children?
MARTHA COREY'S VOICE: I do not hurt them. I scorn it!
GILES' VOICE, *roaring:* I have evidence for the court!
Voices of townspeople rise in excitement.

DANFORTH'S VOICE: You will keep your seat!
GILES' VOICE: Thomas Putnam is reaching out for land!
DANFORTH'S VOICE: Remove that man, Marshal!
GILES' VOICE: You're hearing lies, lies!
A roaring goes up from the people.
HATHORNE'S VOICE: Arrest him, Excellency!
GILES' VOICE: I have evidence. Why will you not hear my evidence?
The door opens and Giles is half carried into the vestry room by Herrick. Francis Nurse enters, trailing anxiously behind Giles.
GILES: Hands off, damn you, let me go!
HERRICK: Giles, Giles!
GILES: Out of my way, Herrick! I bring evidence—
HERRICK : You cannot go in there, Giles; it's a court!
Enter Hale from the court.
HALE: Pray be calm a moment.
GILES: You, Mr. Hale, go in there and demand I speak.
HALE: A moment, sir, a moment.
GILES: They'll be hangin' my wife!
Judge Hathorne enters. He is in his sixties, a bitter, remorseless Salem judge.
HATHORNE: How do you dare come roarin' into this court! Are you gone daft, Corey?
GILES: You're not a Boston judge yet, Hathorne. You'll not call me daft!
Enter Deputy Governor Danforth and, behind him, Ezekiel Cheever and *Parris. On his appearance, silence falls. Danforth is a grave man in his sixties, of some humor and sophistication that do not, however, interfere with an exact loyalty to his position and his cause. He comes down to Giles, who awaits his wrath.*
DANFORTH, *looking directly at Giles:* Who is this man?
PARRIS: Giles Corey, sir, and a more contentious—
GILES, *to Parris:* I am asked the question, and I am old enough to answer it! *To Danforth, who impresses him and to whom he smiles through his strain:* My name is Corey, sir, Giles Corey. I have six hundred acres, and

timber in addition. It is my wife you be condemning now. *He indicates the courtroom.*

DANFORTH: And how do you imagine to help her cause with such contemptuous riot? Now be gone. Your old age alone keeps you out of jail for this.

GILES, *beginning to plead:* They be tellin' lies about my wife, sir, I—

DANFORTH: Do you take it upon yourself to determine what this court shall believe and what it shall set aside?

GILES: Your Excellency, we mean no disrespect for—

DANFORTH: Disrespect indeed! It is disruption, Mister. This is the highest court of the supreme government of this province, do you know it?

GILES, *beginning to weep:* Your Excellency, I only said she were readin' books, sir, and they come and take her out of my house for—

DANFORTH, *mystified:* Books! What books?

GILES, *through helpless sobs:* It is my third wife, sir; I never had no wife that be so taken with books, and I thought to find the cause of it, d'y'see, but it were no witch I blamed her for. *He is openly weeping.* I have broke charity with the woman, I have broke charity with her. *He covers his face, ashamed. Danforth is respectfully silent.*

HALE: Excellency, he claims hard evidence for his wife's defense. I think that in all justice you must—

DANFORTH: Then let him submit his evidence in proper affidavit. You are certainly aware of our procedure here, Mr. Hale. To *Herrick:* Clear this room.

HERRICK: Come now, Giles. He *gently pushes Corey out.*

FRANCIS: We are desperate, sir; we come here three days now and cannot be heard.

DANFORTH: Who is this man?

FRANCIS: Francis Nurse, Your Excellency.

HALE: His wife's Rebecca that were condemned this morning.

DANFORTH: Indeed! I am amazed to find you in such uproar. I have only good report of your character, Mr. Nurse.

HATHORNE: I think they must both be arrested in contempt, sir.

DANFORTH, *to Francis:* Let you write your plea, and in due time I will—
FRANCIS: Excellency, we have proof for your eyes; God forbid you shut them to it. The girls, sir, the girls are frauds.
DANFORTH: What's that?
FRANCIS: We have proof of it, sir. They are all deceiving you.
Danforth is shocked, but studying Francis.
HATHORNE: This is contempt, sir, contempt!
DANFORTH: Peace, Judge Hathorne. Do you know who I am, Mr. Nurse?
FRANCIS: I surely do, sir, and I think you must be a wise judge to be what you are.
DANFORTH: And do you know that near to four hundred are in the jails from Marblehead to Lynn, and upon my signature?
FRANCIS: I—
DANFORTH: And seventy-two condemned to hang by that signature?
FRANCIS: Excellency, I never thought to say it to such a weighty judge, but you are deceived.
Enter Giles Corey from left. All turn to see as he beckons in Mary Warren with Proctor. Mary is keeping her eyes to the ground; Proctor has her elbow as though she were near collapse.
PARRIS, *on seeing her, in shock:* Mary Warren! *He goes directly to bend close to her face.* What are you about here?
PROCTOR, *pressing Parris away from her with a gentle but firm motion of protectiveness:* She would speak with the Deputy Governor.
DANFORTH, *shocked by this, turns to Herrick:* Did you not tell me Mary Warren were sick in bed?
HERRICK: She were, Your Honor. When I go to fetch her to the court last week, she said she were sick.
GILES: She has been strivin' with her soul all week, Your Honor; she comes now to tell the truth of this to you.
DANFORTH: Who is this?
PROCTOR: John Proctor, sir. Elizabeth Proctor is my wife.
PARRIS: Beware this man, Your Excellency, this man is mischief.
HALE, *excitedly:* I think you must hear the girl, sir, she—

DANFORTH, *who has become very interested in Mary Warren and only raises a hand toward Hale:* Peace. What would you tell us, Mary Warren?
Proctor looks at her, but she cannot speak.
PROCTOR: She never saw no spirits, sir.
DANFORTH, *with great alarm and surprise, to Mary:* Never saw rio spirits!
GILES, *eagerly:* Never.
PROCTOR, *reaching into his jacket:* She has signed a deposition, sir—
DANFORTH, *instantly:* No, no, I accept no depositions. *He is rapidly calculating this; he turns from her to Proctor.* Tell me, Mr. Proctor, have you given out this story in the village?
PROCTOR: We have not.
PARRIS: They've come to overthrow the court, sir! This man is—
DANFORTH: I pray you, Mr. Parris. Do you know, Mr. Proctor, that the entire contention of the state in these trials is that the voice of Heaven is speaking through the children?
PROCTOR: I know that, sir.
DANFORTH, *thinks, staring at Proctor, then turns to Mary Warren:* And you, Mary Warren, how came you to cry out people for sending their spirits against you?
MARY WARREN: It were pretense, sir.
DANFORTH: I cannot hear you.
PROCTOR: It were pretense, she says.
DANFORTH: Ah? And the other girls? Susanna Walcott, and—the others? They are also pretending?
MARY WARREN: Aye, sir.
DANFORTH, *wide-eyed:* Indeed. *Pause. He is baffled by this. He turns to study Proctor's face.*
PARRIS, *in a sweat:* Excellency, you surely cannot think to let so vile a lie be spread in open court!
DANFORTH: Indeed not, but it strike hard upon me that she will dare come here with such a tale. Now, Mr. Proctor, before I decide whether I shall hear

you or not, it is my duty to tell you this. We burn a hot fire here; it melts down all concealment.
PROCTOR: I know that, sir.
DANFORTH: Let me continue. I understand well, a husband's tenderness may drive him to extravagance in defense of a wife. Are you certain in your conscience, Mister, that your evidence is the truth?
PROCTOR: It is. And you will surely know it.
DANFORTH: And you thought to declare this revelation in the open court before the public?
PROCTOR: I thought I would, aye—with your permission.
DANFORTH, *his eyes narrowing:* Now, sir, what is your purpose in so doing?
PROCTOR: Why, I—I would free my wife, sir.
DANFORTH: There lurks nowhere in your heart, nor hidden in your spirit, any desire to undermine this court?
PROCTOR, *with the faintest faltering:* Why, no, sir.
CHEEVER, *clears his throat, awakening:* I—Your Excellency.
DANFORTH: Mr. Cheever.
CHEEVER: I think it be my duty, sir—*Kindly, to Proctor:* You'll not deny it, John. *To Danforth:* When we come to take his wife, he damned the court and ripped your warrant.
PARRIS: Now you have it!
DANFORTH: He did that, Mr. Hale?
HALE, *takes a breath:* Aye, he did.
PROCTOR: It were a temper, sir. I knew not what I did.
DANFORTH, *studying him:* Mr. Proctor.
PROCTOR: Aye, sir.
DANFORTH, *straight into his eyes:* Have you ever seen the Devil?
PROCTOR: No, sir.
DANFORTH: You are in all respects a Gospel Christian?
PROCTOR: I am, sir.
PARRIS: Such a Christian that will not come to church but once in a month!

DANFORTH, *restrained—he is curious:* Not come to church?
PROCTOR: I—I have no love for Mr. Parris. It is no secret. But God I surely love.
CHEEVER: He plow on Sunday, sir.
DANFORTH: Plow on Sunday!
CHEEVER, *apologetically:* I think it be evidence, John. I am an official of the court, I cannot keep it.
PROCTOR: I—I have once or twice plowed on Sunday. I have three children, sir, and until last year my land give little.
GILES: You'll find other Christians that do plow on Sunday if the truth be known.
HALE: Your Honor, I cannot think you may judge the man on such evidence.
DANFORTH: I judge nothing. *Pause. He keeps watching Proctor, who tries to meet his gaze.* I tell you straight, Mister—I have seen marvels in this court. I have seen people choked before my eyes by spirits; I have seen them stuck by pins and slashed by daggers. I have until this moment not the slightest reason to suspect that the children may be deceiving me. Do you understand my meaning?
PROCTOR: Excellency, does it not strike upon you that so many of these women have lived so long with such upright reputation, and—
PARRIS: Do you read the Gospel, Mr. Proctor?
PROCTOR: I read the Gospel.
PARRIS: I think not, or you should surely know that Cain were an upright man, and yet he did kill Abel.
PROCTOR: Aye, God tells us that. To *Danforth:* But who tells us Rebecca Nurse murdered seven babies by sending out her spirit on them? It is the children only, and this one will swear she lied to you.
Danforth considers, then beckons Hathorne to him. Hathorne leans in, and he speaks in his ear. Hathorne nods.
HATHORNE: Aye, she's the one.
DANFORTH: Mr. Proctor, this morning, your wife send me a claim in which she states that she is pregnant now.

PROCTOR: My wife pregnant!
DANFORTH: There be no sign of it—we have examined her body.
PROCTOR: But if she say she is pregnant, then she must be! That woman will never lie, Mr. Danforth.
DANFORTH: She will not?
PROCTOR: Never, sir, never.
DANFORTH: We have thought it too convenient to be credited. However, if I should tell you now that I will let her be kept another month; and if she begin to show her natural signs, you shall have her living yet another year until she is delivered—what say you to that? *John Proctor is struck silent.* Come now. You say your only purpose is to save your wife. Good, then, she is saved at least this year, and a year is long. What say you, sir? It is done now. *In conflict, Proctor glances at Francis and Giles.* Will you drop this charge?
PROCTOR: I—I think I cannot.
DANFORTH, *now an almost imperceptible hardness in his voice:* Then your purpose is somewhat larger.
PARRIS: He's come to overthrow this court, Your Honor!
PROCTOR: These are my friends. Their wives are also accused—
DANFORTH, *with a sudden briskness of manner:* I judge you not, sir. I am ready to hear your evidence.
PROCTOR: I come not to hurt the court; I only—
DANFORTH, *cutting him off:* Marshal, go into the court and bid Judge Stoughton and Judge Sewall declare recess for one hour. And let them go to the tavern, if they will. All witnesses and prisoners are to be kept in the building.
HERRICK: Aye, sir. *Very deferentially:* If I may say it, sir, I know this man all my life. It is a good man, sir.
DANFORTH—*it is the reflection on himself he resents:* I am sure of it, Marshal. *Herrick nods, then goes out.* Now, what deposition do you have for us, Mr. Proctor? And I beg you be clear, open as the sky, and honest.
PROCTOR, *as he takes out several papers:* I am no lawyer, so I'll—
DANFORTH: The pure in heart need no lawyers. Proceed as you will.

PROCTOR, *handing Danforth a paper:* Will you read this first, sir? It's a sort of testament. The people signing it declare their good opinion of Rebecca, and my wife, and Martha Corey. *Danforth looks down at the paper.*
PARRIS, *to enlist Danforth's sarcasm:* Their good opinion! *But Danforth goes on reading, and Proctor is heartened.*
PROCTOR: These are all landholding farmers, members of the church. *Delicately, trying to point out a paragraph:* If you'll notice, sir—they've known the women many years and never saw no sign they had dealings with the Devil.
Parris nervously moves over and reads over Danforth's shoulder.
DANFORTH, *glancing down a long list:* How many names are here?
FRANCIS: Ninety-one, Your Excellency.
PARRIS, *sweating:* These people should be summoned. *Danforth looks up at him questioningly.* For questioning.
FRANCIS, *trembling with anger:* Mr. Danforth, I gave them all my word no harm would come to them for signing this.
PARRIS: This is a clear attack upon the court!
HALE, to *Parris, trying to contain himself:* Is every defense an attack upon the court? Can no one—?
PARRIS: All innocent and Christian people are happy for the courts in Salem! These people are gloomy for it. *To Danforth directly:* And I think you will want to know, from each and every one of them, what discontents them with you!
HATHORNE: I think they ought to be examined, sir.
DANFORTH: It is not necessarily an attack, I think. Yet—
FRANCIS: These are all covenanted Christians, sir.
DANFORTH: Then I am sure they may have nothing to fear. *Hands Cheever the paper.* Mr. Cheever, have warrants drawn for all of these—arrest for examination. *To Proctor:* Now, Mister, what other information do you have for us? *Francis is still standing, horrified.* You may sit, Mr. Nurse.
FRANCIS: I have brought trouble on these people; I have—

DANFORTH: No, old man, you have not hurt these people if they are of good conscience. But you must understand, sir, that a person is either with this court or he must be counted against it, there be no road between. This is a sharp time, now, a precise time—we live no longer in the dusky afternoon when evil mixed itself with good and befuddled the world. Now, by God's grace, the shining sun is up, and them that fear not light will surely praise it. I hope you will be one of those. *Mary Warren suddenly sobs.* She's not hearty, I see.

PROCTOR: No, she's not, sir. *To Mary, bending to her, holding her hand, quietly:* Now remember what the angel Raphael said to the boy Tobias. Remember it.

MARY WARREN, *hardly audible:* Aye.

PROCTOR: "Do that which is good, and no harm shall come to thee."

MARY WARREN: Aye.

DANFORTH: Come, man, we wait you.

Marshal Herrick returns, and takes his post at the door.

GILES: John, my deposition, give him mine.

PROCTOR: Aye. *He hands Danforth another paper.* This is Mr. Corey's deposition.

DANFORTH: Oh? *He looks down at it. Now Hathorne comes behind him and reads with him.*

HATHORNE, *suspiciously:* What lawyer drew this, Corey?

GILES: You know I never hired a lawyer in my life, Hathorne.

DANFORTH, *finishing the reading:* It is very well phrased. My compliments. Mr. Parris, if Mr. Putnam is in the court, will you bring him in? *Hathorne takes the deposition, and walks to the window with it. Parris goes into the court.* You have no legal training, Mr. Corey?

GILES, *very pleased:* I have the best, sir—I am thirty-three time in court in my life. And always plaintiff, too.

DANFORTH: Oh, then you're much put-upon.

GILES: I am never put-upon; I know my rights, sir, and I will have them. You know, your father tried a case of mine—might be thirty-five year ago, I think.

DANFORTH: Indeed.
GILES: He never spoke to you of it?
DANFORTH: No, I cannot recall it.
GILES: That's strange, he give me nine pound damages. He were a fair judge, your father. Y'see, I had a white mare that time, and this fellow come to borrow the mare—*Enter Parris with Thomas Putnam. When he sees Putnam, Giles' ease goes; he is hard.*
Aye, there he is.
DANFORTH: Mr. Putnam, I have here an accusation by Mr. Corey against you. He states that you coldly prompted your daughter to cry witchery upon George Jacobs that is now in jail.
PUTNAM: It is a lie.
DANFORTH, *turning to Giles:* Mr. Putnam states your charge is a lie. What say you to that?
GILES, *furious, his fists clenched:* A fart on Thomas Putnam, that is what I say to that!
DANFORTH: What proof do you submit for your charge, sir?
GILES: My proof is there! *Pointing to the paper.* If Jacobs hangs for a witch he forfeit up his property—that's law! And there is none but Putnam with the coin to buy so great a piece. This man is killing his neighbors for their land!
DANFORTH: But proof, sir, proof.
GILES, *pointing at his deposition:* The proof is there! I have it from an honest man who heard Putnam say it! The day his daughter cried out on Jacobs, he said she'd given him a fair gift of land.
HATHORNE: And the name of this man?
GILES, *taken aback:* What name?
HATHORNE: The man that give you this information.
GILES, *hesitates, then:* Why, I—I cannot give you his name.
HATHORNE: And why not?
GILES, *hesitates, then bursts out:* You know well why not! He'll lay in jail if I give his name!
HATHORNE: This is contempt of the court, Mr. Danforth!

DANFORTH, *to avoid that:* You will surely tell us the name.
GILES: I will not give you no name. I mentioned my wife's name once and I'll burn in hell long enough for that. I stand mute.
DANFORTH: In that case, I have no choice but to arrest you for contempt of this court, do you know that?
GILES: This is a hearing; you cannot clap me for contempt of a hearing.
DANFORTH: Oh, it is a proper lawyer! Do you wish me to declare the court in full session here? Or will you give me good reply?
GILES, *faltering:* I cannot give you no name, sir, I cannot.
DANFORTH: You are a foolish old man. Mr. Cheever, begin the record. The court is now in session. I ask you, Mr. Corey—
PROCTOR, *breaking in:* Your Honor—he has the story in confidence, sir, and he—
PARRIS: The Devil lives on such confidences! *To Danforth:* Without confidences there could be no conspiracy, Your Honor!
HATHORNE: I think it must be broken, sir.
DANFORTH, *to Giles:* Old man, if your informant tells the truth let him come here openly like a decent man. But if he hide in anonymity I must know why. Now sir, the government and central church demand of you the name of him who reported Mr. Thomas Putnam a common murderer.
HALE: Excellency—
DANFORTH : Mr. Hale.
HALE: We cannot blink it more. There is a prodigious fear of this court in the country—
DANFORTH: Then there is a prodigious guilt in the country. Are *you* afraid to be questioned here?
HALE: I may only fear the Lord, sir, but there is fear in the country nevertheless.
DANFORTH, *angered now:* Reproach me not with the fear in the country; there is fear in the country because there is a moving plot to topple Christ in the country!
HALE: But it does not follow that everyone accused is part of it.

DANFORTH: No uncorrupted man may fear this court, Mr. Hale! None! To Giles: You are under arrest in contempt of this court. Now sit you down and take counsel with yourself, or you will be set in the jail until you decide to answer all questions.

Giles Corey makes a rush for Putnam. Proctor lunges and holds him.

PROCTOR: No, Giles!

GILES, *over Proctor's shoulder at Putnam:* I'll cut your throat, Putnam, I'll kill you yet!

PROCTOR, *forcing him into a chair:* Peace, Giles, peace. *Releasing him.* We'll prove ourselves. Now we will. *He starts to turn to Danforth.*

GILES: Say nothin' more, John. *Pointing at Danforth:* He's only playin' you! He means to hang us all!

Mary Warren bursts into sobs.

DANFORTH: This is a court of law, Mister. I'll have no effrontery here!

PROCTOR: Forgive him, sir, for his old age. Peace, Giles, we'll prove it all now. *He lifts up Mary's chin.* You cannot weep, Mary. Remember the angel, what he say to the boy. Hold to it, now; there is your *rock. Mary quiets. He takes out a paper, and turns to Danforth.* This is Mary Warren's deposition. I—I would ask you remember, sir, while you read it, that until two week ago she were no different than the other children are today. He *is speaking reasonably, restraining all his fears, his anger, his anxiety.* You saw her scream, she howled, she swore familiar spirits choked her; she even testified that Satan, in the form of women now in jail, tried to win her soul away, and then when she refused—

DANFORTH : We know all this.

PROCTOR: Aye, sir. She swears now that she never saw Satan; nor any spirit, vague or clear, that Satan may have sent to hurt her. And she declares her friends are lying now.

Proctor starts to hand Danforth the deposition, and Hale comes up to Danforth in a trembling state.

HALE: Excellency, a moment. I think this goes to the heart of the matter.

DANFORTH, *with deep misgivings:* It surely does.

HALE: I cannot say he is an honest man; I know him little. But in all justice, sir, a claim so weighty cannot be argued by a farmer. In God's name, sir, stop here; send him home and let him come again with a lawyer —

DANFORTH, *patiently:* Now look you, Mr. Hale—

HALE: Excellency, I have signed seventy-two death warrants; I am a minister of the Lord, and I dare not take a life without there be a proof so immaculate no slightest qualm of conscience may doubt it.

DANFORTH: Mr. Hale, you surely do not doubt my justice.

HALE: I have this morning signed away the soul of Rebecca Nurse, Your Honor. I'll not conceal it, my hand shakes yet as with a wound! I pray you, sir, *this* argument let lawyers present to you.

DANFORTH: Mr. Hale, believe me; for a man of such terrible learning you are most bewildered—I hope you will forgive me. I have been thirty-two year at the bar, sir, and I should be confounded were I called upon to defend these people. Let you consider, now—*To Proctor and the others:* And I bid you all do likewise. In an ordinary crime, how does one defend the accused? One calls up witnesses to prove his innocence. But witchcraft is *ipso facto,* on its face and by its nature, an invisible crime, is it not? Therefore, who may possibly be witness to it? The witch and the victim. None other. Now we cannot hope the witch will accuse herself; granted? Therefore, we must rely upon her victims—and they do testify, the children certainly do testify. As for the witches, none will deny that we are most eager for all their confessions. Therefore, what is left for a lawyer to bring out? I think I have made my point. Have I not?

HALE: But this child claims the girls are not truthful, and if they are not—

DANFORTH: That is precisely what I am about to consider, sir. What more may you ask of me? Unless you doubt my probity?

HALE, *defeated:* I surely do not, sir. Let you consider it, then.

DANFORTH: And let you put your heart to rest. Her deposition, Mr. Proctor.

Proctor hands it to him. Hathorne rises, goes beside Danforth, and starts reading. Parris comes to his other side. Danforth looks at John Proctor,

then proceeds to read. Hale gets up, finds position near the judge, reads too. Proctor glances at Giles. Francis prays silently, hands pressed together. Cheever waits placidly, the sublime official, dutiful. Mary Warren sobs once. John Proctor touches her head reassuringly. Presently Danforth lifts his eyes, *stands up, takes out a kerchief and blows his nose. The others stand aside as he moves in thought toward the window.*

PARRIS, *hardly able to contain his anger and fear:* I should like to question—

DANFORTH—*his first real outburst, in which his contempt for Parris is clear:* Mr. Parris, I bid you be silent! *He stands in silence, looking out the window. Now, having established that he will set the gait:* Mr. Cheever, will you go into the court and bring the children here? *Cheever gets up and goes out upstage.*

Danforth now turns to Mary. Mary Warren, how came you to this turnabout? Has Mr. Proctor threatened you for this deposition?

MARY WARREN: No, sir.

DANFORTH: Has he ever threatened you?

MARY WARREN, *weaker:* No, sir.

DANFORTH, *sensing a weakening:* Has he threatened you?

MARY WARREN: No, sir.

DANFORTH: Then you tell me that you sat in my court, callously lying, when you knew that people would hang by your evidence? *She does not answer.* Answer me!

MARY WARREN, *almost inaudibly:* I did, sir.

DANFORTH: How were you instructed in your life? Do you not know that God damns all liars? *She cannot speak.* Or is it now that you lie?

MARY WARREN: No, sir—I am with God now.

DANFORTH: You are with God now.

MARY WARREN: Aye, sir.

DANFORTH, *containing himself:* I will tell you this—you are either lying now, or you were lying in the court, and in either case you have committed perjury and you will go to jail for it. You cannot lightly say you lied, Mary. Do you know that?

MARY WARREN: I cannot lie no more. I am with God, I am with God.
But she breaks into sobs at the thought of it, and the right door opens, and enter Susanna Walcott, Mercy Lewis, Betty Parris, and finally Abigail. Cheever comes to Danforth.
CHEEVER: Ruth Putnam's not in the court, sir, nor the other children.
DANFORTH: These will be sufficient. Sit you down, children. *Silently they sit.* Your friend, Mary Warren, has given us a deposition. In which she swears that she never saw familiar spirits, apparitions, nor any manifest of the Devil. She claims as well that none of you have seen these things either. *Slight pause.* Now, children, this is a court of law. The law, based upon the Bible, and the Bible, writ by Almighty God, forbid the practice of witchcraft, and describe death as the penalty thereof. But likewise, children, the law and Bible damn all bearers of false witness. *Slight pause.* Now then. It does not escape me that this deposition may be devised to blind us; it may well be that Mary Warren has been conquered by Satan, who sends her here to distract our sacred purpose. If so, her neck will break for it. But if she speak true, I bid you now drop your guile and confess your pretense, for a quick confession will go easier with you. *Pause.* Abigail Williams, rise. *Abigail slowly rises.* Is there any truth in this?
ABIGAIL: No, sir.
DANFORTH, *thinks, glances at Mary, then back to Abigail:* Children, a very augur bit will now be turned into your souls until your honesty is proved. Will either of you change your positions now, or do you force me to hard questioning?
ABIGAIL: I have naught to change, sir. She lies.
DANFORTH, *to Mary:* You would still go on with this?
MARY WARREN, *faintly:* Aye, sir.
DANFORTH, *turning to Abigail:* A poppet were discovered in Mr. Proctor's house, stabbed by a needle. Mary Warren claims that you sat beside her in the court when she made it, and that you saw her make it and witnessed how she herself stuck her needle into it for safe-keeping. What say you to that?
ABIGAIL, *with a slight note of indignation:* It is a lie, sir.

DANFORTH, *after a slight pause:* While you worked for Mr. Proctor, did you see poppets in that house?
ABIGAIL: Goody Proctor always kept poppets.
PROCTOR: Your Honor, my wife never kept no poppets. Mary Warren confesses it was her poppet.
CHEEVER: Your Excellency.
DANFORTH: Mr. Cheever.
CHEEVER: When I spoke with Goody Proctor in that house, she said she never kept no poppets. But she said she did keep poppets when she were a girl.
PROCTOR: She has not been a girl these fifteen years, Your Honor.
HATHORNE: But a poppet will keep fifteen years, will it not?
PROCTOR: It will keep if it is kept, but Mary Warren swears she never saw no poppets in my house, nor anyone else.
PARRIS: Why could there not have been poppets hid where no one ever saw them?
PROCTOR, *furious:* There might also be a dragon with five legs in my house, but no one has ever seen it.
PARRIS: We are here, Your Honor, precisely to discover what no one has ever seen.
PROCTOR: Mr. Danforth, what profit this girl to turn herself about? What may Mary Warren gain but hard questioning and worse?
DANFORTH: You are charging Abigail Williams with a marvelous cool plot to murder, do you understand that?
PROCTOR: I do, sir. I believe she means to murder.
DANFORTH, *pointing at Abigail, incredulously:* This child would murder your wife?
PROCTOR: It is not a child. Now hear me, sir. In the sight of the congregation she were twice this year put out of this meetin' house for laughter during prayer.
DANFORTH, *shocked, turning to Abigail:* What's this? Laughter during—!
PARRIS: Excellency, she were under Tituba's power at that time, but she is solemn now.

GILES: Aye, now she is solemn and goes to hang people!
DANFORTH: Quiet, man.
HATHORNE: Surely it have no bearing on the question, sir. He charges contemplation of murder.
DANFORTH: Aye. *He studies Abigail for a moment, then:* Continue, Mr. Proctor.
PROCTOR: Mary. Now tell the Governor how you danced in the woods.
PARRIS, *instantly:* Excellency, since I come to Salem this man is blackening my name. He—
DANFORTH: In a moment, sir. *To Mary Warren, sternly, and surprised* : What is this dancing?
MARY WARREN: *I- She glances at Abigail, who is staring down at her* remorselessly. Then, appealing to Proctor: Mr. Proctor—
PROCTOR, *taking it right up:* Abigail leads the girls to the woods, Your Honor, and they have danced there naked—
PARRIS: Your Honor, this—
PROCTOR, *at once:* Mr. Parris discovered them himself in the dead of night! There's the "child" she is!
DANFORTH—*it is growing into a nightmare, and he turns, astonished, to Parris:* Mr. Parris—
PARRIS: I can only say, sir, that I never found any of them naked, and this man is—
DANFORTH : But you discovered them dancing in the woods? *Eyes on Parris, he points at Abigail.* Abigail?
HALE: Excellency, when I first arrived from Beverly, Mr. Parris told me that.
DANFORTH: Do you deny it, Mr. Parris?
PARRIS: I do not, sir, but I never saw any of them naked.
DANFORTH: But she have *danced?*
PARRIS, *unwillingly:* Aye, sir.
Danforth, as though with new eyes, looks at Abigail.
HATHORNE: Excellency, will you permit me? *He points at Mary Warren.*
DANFORTH, *with great worry:* Pray, proceed.

HATHORNE: You say you never saw no spirits, Mary, were never threatened or afflicted by any manifest of the Devil or the Devil's agents.
MARY WARREN, *very faintly:* No, sir.
HATHORNE, *with a gleam of victory:* And yet, when people accused of witchery confronted you in court, you would faint, saying their spirits came out of their bodies and choked you—
MARY WARREN: That were pretense, sir.
DANFORTH: I cannot hear you.
MARY WARREN: Pretense, sir.
PARRIS: But you did turn cold, did you not? I myself picked you up many times, and your skin were icy. Mr. Danforth, you—
DANFORTH: I saw that many times.
PROCTOR: She only pretended to faint, Your Excellency. They're all marvelous pretenders.
HATHORNE: Then can she pretend to faint now?
PROCTOR: Now?
PARRIS: Why not? Now there are no spirits attacking her, for none in this room is accused of witchcraft. So let her turn herself cold now, let her pretend she is attacked now, let her faint. *He turns to Mary Warren.* Faint!
MARY WARREN: Faint?
PARRIS: Aye, faint. Prove to us how you pretended in the court so many times.
MARY WARREN, *looking to Proctor:* I—cannot faint now, sir.
PROCTOR, *alarmed, quietly:* Can you not pretend it?
MARY WARREN: I—*She looks about as though searching for the passion to faint.* I—have no sense of it now, I—
DANFORTH: Why? What is lacking now?
MARY WARREN: I—cannot tell, sir, I—
DANFORTH : Might it be that here we have no afflicting spirit loose, but in the court there were some?
MARY WARREN: I never saw no spirits.
PARRIS: Then see no spirits now, and prove to us that you can faint by your own will, as you claim.

MARY WARREN, *stares, searching for the emotion of it, and then shakes her head:* I—cannot do it.
PARRIS: Then you will confess, will you not? It were attacking spirits made you faint!
MARY WARREN: No, sir, I—
PARRIS: Your Excellency, this is a trick to blind the court!
MARY WARREN: It's not a trick! *She stands.* I—I used to faint because I—I thought I saw spirits.
DANFORTH: *Thought* you saw them!
MARY WARREN: But I did not, Your Honor.
HATHORNE: How could you think you saw them unless you saw them?
MARY WARREN: I—I cannot tell how, but I did. I—I heard the other girls screaming, and you, Your Honor, you seemed to believe them, and I—It were only sport in the beginning, sir, but then the whole world cried spirits, spirits, and I—I promise you, Mr. Danforth, I only thought I saw them but I did not.
Danforth peers at her.
PARRIS, *smiling, but nervous because Danforth seems to be struck by Mary Warren's story:* Surely Your Excellency is not taken by this simple lie.
DANFORTH, *turning worriedly to Abigail:* Abigail. I bid you now search your heart and tell me this—and beware of it, child, to God every soul is precious and His vengeance is terrible on them that take life without cause. Is it possible, child, that the spirits you have seen are illusion only, some deception that may cross your mind when—
ABIGAIL: Why, this—this—is a base question, sir.
DANFORTH: Child, I would have you consider it—
ABIGAIL : I have been hurt, Mr. Danforth; I have seen my blood runnin' out! I have been near to murdered every day because I done my duty pointing out the Devil's people—and this is my reward? To be mistrusted, denied, questioned like a—
DANFORTH, *weakening:* Child, I do not mistrust you—
ABIGAIL, *in an open threat:* Let *you* beware, Mr. Danforth. Think you to be so mighty that the power of Hell may not turn *your* wits? Beware of it!

There is—*Suddenly, from an accusatory attitude, her face turns, looking into the air above-it is truly frightened.*
DANFORTH, *apprehensively:* What is it, child?
ABIGAIL, *looking about in the air, clasping her arms about her as though cold:* I—I know not. A wind, a cold wind, has come. *Her eyes fall on Mary Warren.*
MARY WARREN, *terrified, pleading:* Abby!
MERCY LEWIS, *shivering:* Your Honor, I freeze!
PROCTOR: They're pretending!
HATHORNE, *touching Abigail's hand:* She is cold, Your Honor, touch her!
MERCY LEWIS, *through chattering teeth:* Mary, do you send this shadow on me?
MARY WARREN: Lord, save me!
SUSANNA WALCOTT: I freeze, I freeze!
ABIGAIL, *shivering visibly:* It is a wind, a wind!
MARY WARREN: Abby, don't do that!
DANFORTH, *himself engaged and entered by Abigail:* Mary Warren, do you witch her? I say to you, do you send your spirit out?
With a hysterical cry Mary Warren starts to run. Proctor catches her.
MARY WARREN, *almost collapsing:* Let me go, Mr. Proctor, I cannot, I cannot—
ABIGAIL, *crying to Heaven:* Oh, Heavenly Father, take away this shadow!
Without warning or hesitation, Proctor leaps at Abigail and, grabbing her by the hair, pulls her to her feet. She screams in pain. Danforth, astonished, cries, "What are you about?" and Hathorne and Parris call, "Take your hands off her!" and out of it all comes Proctor's roaring voice.
PROCTOR: How do you call Heaven! Whore! Whore!
Herrick breaks Proctor from her.
HERRICK: John!
DANFORTH: Man! Man, what do you—
PROCTOR, breathless and in agony: It is a whore!
DANFORTH, *dumfounded:* You charge—?
ABIGAIL: Mr. Danforth, he is lying!

PROCTOR: Mark her! Now she'll suck a scream to stab me with, but—
DANFORTH: You will prove this! This will not pass!
PROCTOR, *trembling, his life collapsing about him:* I have known her, sir. I have known her.
DANFORTH: You—you are a lecher?
FRANCIS, *horrified:* John, you cannot say such a—
PROCTOR: Oh, Francis, I wish you had some evil in you that you might know me! To *Danforth:* A man will not cast away his good name. You surely know that.
DANFORTH, *dumfounded:* In—in what time? In what place?
PROCTOR, *his voice about to break, and his shame great:* In the proper place—where my beasts are bedded. On the last night of my joy, some eight months past. She used to serve me in my house, sir. *He has to clamp his jaw to keep from weeping.* A man may think God sleeps, but God sees everything, I know it now. I beg you, sir, I beg you—see her what she is. My wife, my dear good wife, took this girl soon after, sir, and put her out on the highroad. And being what she is, a lump of vanity, sir—He is *being overcome.* Excellency, forgive me, forgive me. *Angrily against himself, he turns away from the Governor for a moment. Then, as though to cry out is his only means of speech left:* She thinks to dance with me on my wife's grave! And well she might, for I thought of her softly. God help me, I lusted, and there is a promise in such sweat. But it is a whore's vengeance, and you must see it; I set myself entirely in your hands. I know you must see it now.
DANFORTH, *blanched, in horror, turning to Abigail:* You deny every scrap and tittle of this?
ABIGAIL: If I must answer that, I will leave and I will not come back again!
Danforth seems unsteady.
PROCTOR: I have made a bell of my honor! I have rung the doom of my good name—you will believe me, Mr. Danforth! My wife is innocent, except she knew a whore when she saw one!

ABIGAIL, *stepping* up *to Danforth:* What look do you give me? *Danforth cannot speak.* I'll not have such looks! *She turns and starts for the door.*
DANFORTH: You will remain where you are! *Herrick steps into her path. She comes up short, fire in her eyes.* Mr. Parris, go into the court and bring Goodwife Proctor out.
PARRIS, *objecting:* Your Honor, this is all a—
DANFORTH, *sharply to Parris:* Bring her out! And tell her not one word of what's been spoken here. And let you knock before you enter. *Parris goes out.* Now we shall touch the bottom of this swamp. *To Proctor:* Your wife, you say, is an honest woman.
PROCTOR: In her life, sir, she have never lied. There are them that cannot sing, and them that cannot weep—my wife cannot lie. I have paid much to learn it, sir.
DANFORTH: And when she put this girl out of your house, she put her out for a harlot?
PROCTOR: Aye, sir.
DANFORTH: And knew her for a harlot?
PROCTOR: Aye, sir, she knew her for a harlot.
DANFORTH: Good then. To *Abigail:* And if she tell me, child, it were for harlotry, may God spread His mercy on you! *There is a knock. He calls to the door.* Hold! To *Abigail:* Turn your back. Turn your back. To Proctor: Do likewise. *Both turn their backs-Abigail with indignant slowness.* Now let neither of you turn to face Goody Proctor. No one in this room is to speak one word, or raise a gesture aye or *nay. He turns toward the door, calls: Enter! The door opens. Elizabeth enters with Parris. Parris leaves her. She stands alone, her eyes looking for Proctor.*
Mr. Cheever, report this testimony in all exactness. Are you ready?
CHEEVER: Ready, sir.
DANFORTH: Come here, woman. *Elizabeth comes to him, glancing at Proctor's back.* Look at me only, not at your husband. In my eyes only.
ELIZABETH, *faintly:* Good, sir.
DANFORTH: We are given to understand that at one time you dismissed your servant, Abigail Williams.

ELIZABETH : That is true, sir.
DANFORTH: For what cause did you dismiss her? *Slight pause. Then Elizabeth tries to glance at Proctor.* You will look in my eyes only and not at your husband. The answer is in your memory and you need no help to give it to me. Why did you dismiss Abigail Williams?
ELIZABETH, *not knowing what to say, sensing a situation, wetting her lips to stall for time:* She—dissatisfied me. *Pause.* And my husband.
DANFORTH: In what way dissatisfied you?
ELIZABETH: She were—*She glances at Proctor for a cue.*
DANFORTH: Woman, look at me! *Elizabeth does.* Were she slovenly ? Lazy? What disturbance did she cause?
ELIZABETH: Your Honor, I—in that time I were sick. And I—My husband is a good and righteous man. He is never drunk as some are, nor wastin' his time at the shovelboard, but always at his work. But in my sickness—you see, sir, I were a long time sick after my last baby, and I thought I saw my husband somewhat turning from me. And this girl—*She turns to Abigail.*
DANFORTH: Look at me.
ELIZABETH: Aye, sir. Abigail Williams—*She breaks off.*
DANFORTH: What of Abigail Williams?
ELIZABETH: I came to think he fancied her. And so one night I lost my wits, I think, and put her out on the highroad.
DANFORTH: Your husband—did he indeed turn from you?
ELIZABETH, *in agony:* My husband—is a goodly man, sir.
DANFORTH: Then he did not turn from you.
ELIZABETH, starting to glance at Proctor: He—
DANFORTH, *reaches out and holds her face, then:* Look at me! To your own knowledge, has John Proctor ever committed the crime of lechery? *In a crisis of indecision she cannot speak.* Answer my question! Is your husband a lecher!
ELIZABETH, *faintly:* No, sir.
DANFORTH: Remove her, Marshal.
PROCTOR: Elizabeth, tell the truth!
DANFORTH: She has spoken. Remove her!

PROCTOR, *crying out:* Elizabeth, I have confessed it!
ELIZABETH: Oh, God! *The door closes behind her.*
PROCTOR: She only thought to save my name!
HALE: Excellency, it is a natural lie to tell; I beg you, stop now before another is condemned! I may shut my conscience to it no more—private vengeance is working through this testimony! From the beginning this man has struck me true. By my oath to Heaven, I believe him now, and I pray you call back his wife before we—
DANFORTH: She spoke nothing of lechery, and this man has lied!
HALE: I believe him! *Pointing at Abigail:* This girl has always struck me false! She has—
Abigail, with a weird, wild, chilling cry, screams up to the ceiling.
ABIGAIL: You will not! Begone! Begone, I say!
DANFORTH: What is it, child? *But Abigail, pointing with fear, is now raising up her frightened eyes, her awed face, toward the ceiling—the girls are doing the same—and now Hathorne, Hale, Putnam, Cheever, Herrick, and Danforth do the same. What's there? He lowers his eyes from the ceiling, and now he is frightened; there is real tension in his voice.* Child! *She is transfixed-with all the girls, she is whimpering open-mouthed, agape at the ceiling.* Girls! Why do you—?
MERCY LEWIS, *pointing:* It's on the beam! Behind the rafter!
DANFORTH, *looking up:* Where!
ABIGAIL: Why—? *She gulps.* Why do you come, yellow bird?
PROCTOR: Where's a bird? I see no bird!
ABIGAIL, *to the ceiling:* My face? My face?
PROCTOR: Mr. Hale—
DANFORTH: Be quiet!
PROCTOR, *to Hale:* Do you see a bird?
DANFORTH: Be quiet!!
ABIGAIL, *to the ceiling, in a genuine conversation with the* "bird," *as though trying to talk it out of attacking her:* But God made my face; you cannot want to tear my face. Envy is a deadly sin, Mary.

MARY WARREN, *on her feet with a spring, and horrified, pleading:* Abby!
ABIGAIL, *unperturbed, continuing* to the *"bird":* Oh, Mary, this is a black art to change your shape. No, I cannot, I cannot stop my mouth; it's God's work I do.
MARY WARREN: Abby, I'm *here!*
PROCTOR, *frantically:* They're pretending, Mr. Danforth!
ABIGAIL—*now she takes a backward step, as though in fear the bird will swoop down momentarily:* Oh, please, Mary! Don't come down.
SUSANNA WALCOTT: Her claws, she's stretching her claws!
PROCTOR: Lies, lies.
ABIGAIL, *backing further, eyes still fixed above:* Mary, please don't hurt me!
MARY WARREN, *to Danforth:* I'm not hurting her!
DANFORTH, *to Mary Warren:* Why does she see this vision?
MARY WARREN : She sees nothin'!
ABIGAIL, *now staring full front as though hypnotized, and mimicking the exact tone of Mary Warren's cry:* She sees nothin'!
MARY WARREN, *pleading:* Abby, you mustn't!
ABIGAIL AND ALL THE GIRLS, *all transfixed:* Abby, you mustn't!
MARY WARREN, *to all the girls:* I'm here, I'm here!
GIRLS: I'm here, I'm here!
DANFORTH, *horrified:* Mary Warren! Draw back your spirit out of them!
MARY WARREN: Mr. Danforth!
GIRLS, *cutting her off:* Mr. Danforth!
DANFORTH: Have you compacted with the Devil? Have you?
MARY WARREN: Never, never!
GIRLS: Never, never!
DANFORTH, *growing hysterical:* Why can they only repeat you?
PROCTOR: Give me a whip—I'll stop it!
MARY WARREN: They're sporting. They—!
GIRLS: They're sporting!

MARY WARREN, *turning on them all hysterically and stamping her* feet: Abby, stop it!
GIRLS, *stamping their feet:* Abby, stop it!
MARY WARREN: Stop it!
GIRLS: Stop it!
MARY WARREN, *screaming it out at the top of her lungs, and raising her fists:* Stop it!!
GIRLS, *raising their fists:* Stop it!!
Mary Warren, utterly confounded, and becoming overwhelmed by *Abigail's —and* the *girls'—utter conviction, starts to whimper, hands half raised, powerless, and all the girls begin whimpering exactly as she does.*
DANFORTH: A little while ago you were afflicted. Now it seems you afflict others; where did you find this power?
MARY WARREN, *staring at Abigail :* I—have no power.
GIRLS: I have no power.
PROCTOR: They're gulling you, Mister!
DANFORTH: Why did you turn about this past two weeks? You have seen the Devil, have you not?
HALE, *indicating Abigail and the girls:* You cannot believe them!
MARY WARREN: I—
PROCTOR, *sensing her weakening:* Mary, God damns all liars!
DANFORTH, *pounding it into her:* You have seen the Devil, you have made compact with Lucifer, have you not?
PROCTOR: God damns liars, Mary!
Mary utters something unintelligible, staring at Abigail, who keeps watching the "bird" above.
DANFORTH: I cannot hear you. What do you say? *Mary utters again unintelligibly.* You will confess yourself or you will hang! *He turns her roughly to face him.* Do you know who I am? I say you will hang if you do not open with me!
PROCTOR: Mary, remember the angel Raphael—do that which is good and —

ABIGAIL, *pointing upward:* The wings! Her wings are spreading! Mary, please, don‘t, don’t—!
HALE: I see nothing, Your Honor!
DANFORTH: Do you confess this power! *He is an inch from her face.* Speak!
ABIGAIL: She’s going to come down! She’s walking the beam!
DANFORTH: Will you speak!
MARY WARREN, *staring in horror:* I cannot!
GIRLS: I cannot!
PARRIS: Cast the Devil out! Look him in the face! Trample him! We’ll save you, Mary, only stand fast against him and—
ABIGAIL, *looking up:* Look out! She’s coming down!
She and all the girls run to one wall, shielding their eyes. And now, as though cornered, they let out a gigantic scream, and Mary, as though infected, opens her mouth and screams with them. Gradually Abigail and the girls leave off, until only Mary is left there, staring up at the “bird,”screaming madly. All watch her, horrified by this evident fit. Proctor strides to her.
PROCTOR: Mary, tell the Governor what they—*He has hardly got a word out, when, seeing him coming for her, she rushes out of his reach, screaming in horror.*
MARY WARREN: Don’t touch me—don’t touch me! *At which the girls halt at the door.*
PROCTOR, *astonished:* Mary!
MARY WARREN, *pointing at Proctor:* You’re the Devil’s man!
He is stopped in his tracks.
PARRIS: Praise God!
GIRLS: Praise God!
PROCTOR, *numbed:* Mary, how—?
MARY WARREN: I’ll not hang with you! I love God, I love God.
DANFORTH, to *Mary:* He bid you do the Devil’s work?
MARY WARREN, *hysterically, indicating Proctor:* He come at me by night and every day to sign, to sign, to—

DANFORTH: Sign what?
PARRIS: The Devil's book? He come with a book?
MARY WARREN, *hysterically, pointing at Proctor, fearful of him:* My name, he want my name. "I'll murder you," he says, "if my wife hangs! We must go and overthrow the court," he says!
Danforth's head jerks toward Proctor, shock and horror in his face.
PROCTOR, *turning, appealing to Hale:* Mr. Hale!
MARY WARREN, *her sobs beginning:* He wake me every night, his eyes were like coals and his fingers claw my neck, and I sign, I sign …
HALE: Excellency, this child's gone wild!
PROCTOR, *as Danforth's wide eyes pour on him:* Mary, Mary!
MARY WARREN, *screaming at him:* No, I love God; I go your way no more. I love God, I bless God. *Sobbing, she rushes to Abigail.* Abby, Abby, I'll never hurt you more! *They all watch, as Abigail, out of her infinite charity, reaches out and draws the sobbing Mary to her, and then looks up to Danforth.*
DANFORTH, *to Proctor:* What are you? *Proctor is beyond speech in his anger.* You are combined with anti-Christ, are you not? I have seen your power; you will not deny it! What say you, Mister?
HALE: Excellency—
DANFORTH : I will have nothing from you, Mr. Hale! To *Proctor:* Will you confess yourself befouled with Hell, or do you keep that black allegiance yet? What say you?
PROCTOR, *his mind wild, breathless:* I say—I say—God is dead!
PARRIS: Hear it, hear it!
PROCTOR, *laughs insanely, then:* A fire, a fire is burning! I hear the boot of Lucifer, I see his filthy face! And it is my face, and yours, Danforth! For them that quail to bring men out of ignorance, as I have quailed, and as you quail now when you know in all your black hearts that this be fraud—God damns our kind especially, and we will burn, we will burn together!
DANFORTH: Marshal! Take him and Corey with him to the jail!
HALE, *starting across to the door:* I denounce these proceedings!
PROCTOR: You are pulling Heaven down and raising up a whore!

HALE: I denounce these proceedings, I quit this court! *He slams the door to the outside behind him.*
DANFORTH, *calling to him in a fury:* Mr. Hale! Mr. Hale!

THE CURTAIN FALLS

ACT FOUR

A cell in Salem jail, that fall.
At the back is a high barred window; near it, a great, heavy door. Along the walls are two benches.
The place is in darkness but for the moonlight seeping through the bars. It appears empty. Presently footsteps are heard coming down a corridor beyond the wall, keys rattle, and the door swings open. Marshal Herrick enters with a lantern.
He is nearly drunk, and heavy-footed. He goes to a bench and nudges a bundle of rags lying on it.

HERRICK: Sarah, wake up! Sarah Good! *He then crosses to the other bench.*
SARAH GOOD, *rising in her rags:* Oh, Majesty! Comin‘, comin’! Tituba, he’s here, His Majesty’s come!
HERRICK: Go to the north cell; this place is wanted now. *He hangs his lantern on the wall. Tituba sits up.*
TITUBA: That don’t look to me like His Majesty; look to me like the marshal.
HERRICK, *taking out a flask:* Get along with you now, clear this place. *He drinks, and Sarah Good comes and peers up into his face.*
SARAH GOOD: Oh, is it you, Marshal! I thought sure you be the Devil comin’ for us. Could I have a sip of cider for me goin’- away ?
HERRICK, *handing her the flask:* And where are you off to, Sarah?
TITUBA, *as Sarah drinks:* We goin’ to Barbados, soon the Devil gits here with the feathers and the wings.

HERRICK: Oh? A happy voyage to you.
SARAH GOOD: A pair of bluebirds wingin' southerly, the two of us! Oh, it be a grand transformation, Marshal! *She raises the flask to drink again.*
HERRICK, *taking the flask from her lips:* You'd best give me that or you'll never rise off the ground. Come along now.
TITUBA: I'll speak to him for you, if you desires to come along, Marshal.
HERRICK: I'd not refuse it, Tituba; it's the proper morning to fly into Hell.
TITUBA: Oh, it be no Hell in Barbados. Devil, him be pleasure-man in Barbados, him be singin' and dancin' in Barbados. It's you folks—you riles him up 'round here; it be too cold 'round here for that Old Boy. He freeze his soul in Massachusetts, but in Barbados be just as sweet and—*A bellowing cow is heard, and Tituba leaps up and calls to the window:* Aye, sir! That's him, Sarah!
SARAH GOOD: I'm here, Majesty! *They hurriedly pick up their rags as Hopkins, a guard, enters.*
HOPKINS: The Deputy Governor's arrived.
HERRICK, *grabbing Tituba:* Come along, come along.
TITUBA, *resisting him:* No, he comin' for me. I goin' home!
HERRICK, *pulling her to the door:* That's not Satan, just a poor old cow with a hatful of milk. Come along now, out with you!
TITUBA, *calling to the window:* Take me home, Devil! Take me home!
SARAH GOOD, *following the shouting Tituba out:* Tell him I'm goin', Tituba! Now you tell him Sarah Good is goin' too!
In the corridor outside Tituba calls on—"Take me home, Devil; Devil take me home!" and Hopkins' voice orders her to move on. Herrick returns and begins to push old rags and straw into a corner. Hearing footsteps, he turns, and enter Danforth and Judge Hathorne. They are in greatcoats and wear hats against the bitter cold. They are followed in by Cheever, who carries a dispatch case and a flat wooden box containing his writing materials.
HERRICK: Good morning, Excellency.
DANFORTH: Where is Mr. Parris?
HERRICK: I'll fetch him. *He starts for the door.*

DANFORTH: Marshal. *Herrick stops.* When did Reverend Hale arrive?
HERRICK: It were toward midnight, I think.
DANFORTH, *suspiciously:* What is he about here?
HERRICK: He goes among them that will hang, sir. And he prays with them. He sits with Goody Nurse now. And Mr. Parris with him.
DANFORTH: Indeed. That man have no authority to enter here, Marshal. Why have you let him in?
HERRICK: Why, Mr. Parris command me, sir. I cannot deny him.
DANFORTH: Are you drunk, Marshal?
HERRICK: No, sir; it is a bitter night, and I have no fire here.
DANFORTH, *containing his anger:* Fetch Mr. Parris.
HERRICK: Aye, sir.
DANFORTH: There is a prodigious stench in this place.
HERRICK: I have only now cleared the people out for you.
DANFORTH: Beware hard drink, Marshal.
HERRICK: Aye, sir. *He waits an instant for further orders. But Danforth, in dissatisfaction, turns his back on him, and Herrick goes out. There is a pause. Danforth stands in thought.*
HATHORNE: Let you question Hale, Excellency; I should not be surprised he have been preaching in Andover lately.
DANFORTH: We'll come to that; speak nothing of Andover. Parris prays with him. That's strange. *He blows on his hands, moves toward the window, and looks out.*
HATHORNE: Excellency, I wonder if it be wise to let Mr. Parris so continuously with the prisoners. *Danforth turns to him, interested.* I think, sometimes, the man has a mad look these days.
DANFORTH: Mad?
HATHORNE: I met him yesterday coming out of his house, and I bid him good morning—and he wept and went his way. I think it is not well the village sees him so unsteady.
DANFORTH: Perhaps he have some sorrow.
CHEEVER, *stamping his feet against the cold:* I think it be the cows, sir.
DANFORTH: Cows?

CHEEVER: There be so many cows wanderin' the highroads, now their masters are in the jails, and much disagreement who they will belong to now. I know Mr. Parris be arguin' with farmers all yesterday—there is great contention, sir, about the cows. Contention make him weep, sir; it were always a man that weep for contention. *He turns, as do Hathorne and Danforth, hearing someone coming up the corridor. Danforth raises his head as Parris enters. He is gaunt, frightened, and sweating in his greatcoat.*

PARRIS, *to Danforth, instantly:* Oh, good morning, sir, thank you for coming, I beg your pardon wakin' you so early. Good morning, Judge Hathorne.

DANFORTH: Reverend Hale have no right to enter this—

PARRIS: Excellency, a moment. *He hurries back and shuts the door.*

HATHORNE: Do you leave him alone with the prisoners?

DANFORTH: What's his business here?

PARRIS, *prayerfully holding up his hands:* Excellency, hear me. It is a providence. Reverend Hale has returned to bring Rebecca Nurse to God.

DANFORTH, *surprised:* He bids her confess?

PARRIS, *sitting:* Hear me. Rebecca have not given me a word this three month since she came. Now she sits with him, and her sister and Martha Corey and two or three others, and he pleads with them, confess their crimes and save their lives.

DANFORTH: Why—this is indeed a providence. And they soften, they soften?

PARRIS: Not yet, not yet. But I thought to summon you, sir, that we might think on whether it be not wise, to—*He dares not say it.* I had thought to put a question, sir, and I hope you will not—

DANFORTH : Mr. Parris, be plain, what troubles you?

PARRIS: There is news, sir, that the court—the court must reckon with. My niece, sir, my niece—I believe she has vanished.

DANFORTH: Vanished!

PARRIS: I had thought to advise you of it earlier in the week, but—

DANFORTH: Why? How long is she gone?

PARRIS: This be the third night. You see, sir, she told me she would stay a night with Mercy Lewis. And next day, when she does not return, I send to Mr. Lewis to inquire. Mercy told him she would sleep in *my* house for a night.
DANFORTH: They are both gone?!
PARRIS, *in fear of him:* They are, sir.
DANFORTH, *alarmed:* I will send a party for them. Where may they be?
PARRIS: Excellency, I think they be aboard a ship. *Danforth stands agape.* My daughter tells me how she heard them speaking of ships last week, and tonight I discover my—my strongbox is broke into. *He presses his fingers against his eyes to keep back tears.*
HATHORNE, *astonished:* She have robbed you?
PARRIS: Thirty-one pound is gone. I am penniless. *He covers his face and sobs.*
DANFORTH: Mr. Parris, you are a brainless man! *He walks in thought, deeply worried.*
PARRIS: Excellency, it profit nothing you should blame me. I cannot think they would run off except they fear to keep in Salem any more. *He is pleading.* Mark it, sir, Abigail had close knowledge of the town, and since the news of Andover has broken here—
DANFORTH : Andover is remedied. The court returns there on Friday, and will resume examinations.
PARRIS: I am sure of it, sir. But the rumor here speaks rebellion in Andover, and it—
DANFORTH: There is no rebellion in Andover!
PARRIS: I tell you what is said here, sir. Andover have thrown out the court, they say, and will have no part of witchcraft. There be a faction here, feeding on that news, and I tell you true, sir, I fear there will be riot here.
HATHORNE: Riot! Why at every execution I have seen naught but high satisfaction in the town.
PARRIS: Judge Hathorne—it were another sort that hanged till now. Rebecca Nurse is no Bridget that lived three year with Bishop before she married him. John Proctor is not Isaac Ward that drank his family to ruin.

To Danforth: I would to God it were not so, Excellency, but these people have great weight yet in the town. Let Rebecca stand upon the gibbet and send up some righteous prayer, and I fear she'll wake a vengeance on you.
HATHORNE: Excellency, she is condemned a witch. The court have—
DANFORTH, *in deep concern, raising a hand to Hathorne:* Pray you. *To Parris:* How do you propose, then?
PARRIS: Excellency, I would postpone these hangin's for a time.
DANFORTH: There will be no postponement.
PARRIS: Now Mr. Hale's returned, there is hope, I think—for if he bring even one of these to God, that confession surely damns the others in the public eye, and none may doubt more that they are all linked to Hell. This way, unconfessed and claiming innocence, doubts are multiplied, many honest people will weep for them, and our good purpose is lost in their tears.
DANFORTH, *after thinking a moment, then going to Cheever:* Give me the list.
Cheever opens the dispatch case, searches.
PARRIS: It cannot be forgot, sir, that when I summoned the congregation for John Proctor's excommunication there were hardly thirty people come to hear it. That speak a discontent, I think, and—
DANFORTH, *studying the list:* There will be no postponement.
PARRIS: Excellency—
DANFORTH: Now, sir—which of these in your opinion may be brought to God? I will myself strive with him till dawn. He *hands the list to Parris, who merely glances at it.*
PARRIS: There is not sufficient time till dawn.
DANFORTH: I shall do my utmost. Which of them do you have hope for?
PARRIS, *not even glancing at the list now, and in a quavering voice, quietly:* Excellency—a dagger—*He chokes up.*
DANFORTH: What do you say?
PARRIS: Tonight, when I open my door to leave my house—a dagger clattered to the ground. *Silence. Danforth absorbs this. Now Parris cries*

out: You cannot hang this sort. There is danger for me. I dare not step outside at night!

Reverend Hale enters. They look at him for an instant in silence. He is steeped in sorrow, exhausted, and more direct than he ever was.

DANFORTH: Accept my congratulations, Reverend Hale; we are gladdened to see you returned to your good work.

HALE, *coming to Danforth now:* You must pardon them. They will not budge.

Herrick enters, waits.

DANFORTH, *conciliatory:* You misunderstand, sir; I cannot pardon these when twelve are already hanged for the same crime. It is not just.

PARRIS, *with failing heart:* Rebecca will not confess?

HALE: The sun will rise in a few minutes. Excellency, I must have more time.

DANFORTH: Now hear me, and beguile yourselves no more. I will not receive a single plea for pardon or postponement. Them that will not confess will hang. Twelve are already executed; the names of these seven are given out, and the village expects to see them die this morning. Postponement now speaks a floundering on my part; reprieve or pardon must cast doubt upon the guilt of them that died till now. While I speak God's law, I will not crack its voice with whimpering. If retaliation is your fear, know this—I should hang ten thousand that dared to rise against the law, and an ocean of salt tears could not melt the resolution of the statutes. Now draw yourselves up like men and help me, as you are bound by Heaven to do. Have you spoken with them all, Mr. Hale?

HALE: All but Proctor. He is in the dungeon.

DANFORTH, to *Herrick:* What's Proctor's way now?

HERRICK: He sits like some great bird; you'd not know he lived except he will take food from time to time.

DANFORTH, *after thinking a moment:* His wife—his wife must be well on with child now.

HERRICK: She is, sir.

DANFORTH: What think you, Mr. Parris? You have closer knowledge of this man; might her presence soften him?
PARRIS: It is possible, sir. He have not laid eyes on her these three months. I should summon her.
DANFORTH, *to Herrick:* Is he yet adamant? Has he struck at you again?
HERRICK: He cannot, sir, he is chained to the wall now.
DANFORTH, *after thinking on it:* Fetch Goody Proctor to me. Then let you bring him up.
HERRICK: Aye, sir. *Herrick goes. There is silence.*
HALE: Excellency, if you postpone a week and publish to the town that you are striving for their confessions, that speak mercy on your part, not faltering.
DANFORTH: Mr. Hale, as God have not empowered me like Joshua to stop this sun from rising, so I cannot withhold from them the perfection of their punishment.
HALE, *harder now:* If you think God wills you to raise rebellion, Mr. Danforth, you are mistaken!
DANFORTH, *instantly:* You have heard rebellion spoken in the town?
HALE: Excellency, there are orphans wandering from house to house; abandoned cattle bellow on the highroads, the stink of rotting crops hangs everywhere, and no man knows when the harlots' cry will end his life—and you wonder yet if rebellion's spoke? Better you should marvel how they do not burn your province!
DANFORTH: Mr. Hale, have you preached in Andover this month?
HALE: Thank God they have no need of me in Andover.
DANFORTH: You baffle me, sir. Why have you returned here?
HALE: Why, it is all simple. I come to do the Devil's work. I come to counsel Christians they should belie themselves. *His sarcasm collapses.* There is blood on my head! Can you not see the blood on my head!!
PARRIS: Hush! *For he has heard footsteps. They all face the door. Herrick enters with Elizabeth. Her wrists are linked by heavy chain, which Herrick now removes. Her clothes are dirty; her face is pale and gaunt. Herrick goes out.*

DANFORTH, *very politely:* Goody Proctor. *She is silent.* I hope you are hearty?
ELIZABETH, *as a warning reminder:* I am yet six month before my time.
DANFORTH: Pray be at your ease, we come not for your life. We—*uncertain how to plead, for he is not accustomed to it.* Mr. Hale, will you speak with the woman?
HALE: Goody Proctor, your husband is marked to hang this morning.
Pause.
ELIZABETH, *quietly:* I have heard it.
HALE: You know, do you not, that I have no connection with the court? *She seems to doubt it.* I come of my own, Goody Proctor. I would save your husband's life, for if he is taken I count myself his murderer. Do you understand me?
ELIZABETH: What do you want of me?
HALE: Goody Proctor, I have gone this three month like our Lord into the wilderness. I have sought a Christian way, for damnation's doubled on a minister who counsels men to lie.
HATHORNE: It is no lie, you cannot speak of lies.
HALE: It is a lie! They are innocent!
DANFORTH: I'll hear no more of that!
HALE, *continuing to Elizabeth:* Let you not mistake your duty as I mistook my own. I came into this village like a bridegroom to his beloved, bearing gifts of high religion; the very crowns of holy law I brought, and what I touched with my bright confidence, it died; and where I turned the eye of my great faith, blood flowed up. Beware, Goody Proctor—cleave to no faith when faith brings blood. It is mistaken law that leads you to sacrifice. Life, woman, life is God's most precious gift; no principle, however glorious, may justify the taking of it. I beg you, woman, prevail upon your husband to confess. Let him give his lie. Quail not before God's judgment in this, for it may well be God damns a liar less than he that throws his life away for pride. Will you plead with him? I cannot think he will listen to another.
ELIZABETH, *quietly:* I think that be the Devil's argument.

HALE, *with a climactic desperation:* Woman, before the laws of God we are as swine! We cannot read His will!
ELIZABETH: I cannot dispute with you, sir; I lack learning for it.
DANFORTH, *going to her:* Goody Proctor, you are not summoned here for disputation. Be there no wifely tenderness within you? He will die with the sunrise. Your husband. Do you understand it? *She only looks at him.* What say you? Will you contend with him? *She is silent.* Are you stone? I tell you true, woman, had I no other proof of your unnatural life, your dry eyes now would be sufficient evidence that you delivered up your soul to Hell! A very ape would weep at such calamity! Have the Devil dried up any tear of pity in you? *She is silent.* Take her out. It profit nothing she should speak to him!
ELIZABETH, *quietly:* Let me speak with him, Excellency.
PARRIS, *with hope:* You'll strive with him? *She hesitates.*
DANFORTH: Will you plead for his confession or will you not?
ELIZABETH: I promise nothing. Let me speak with him.
A sound—the sibilance of dragging feet on stone. They turn. A pause. Herrick enters with John Proctor. His wrists are chained. He is another man, bearded, filthy, his eyes misty as though webs had overgrown them. He halts inside the doorway, his eye caught by the sight of Elizabeth. The emotion flowing between them prevents anyone from speaking for an instant. Now Hale, visibly affected, goes to Danforth and speaks quietly.
HALE: Pray, leave them, Excellency.
DANFORTH, *pressing Hale impatiently aside:* Mr. Proctor, you have been notified, have you not? *Proctor is silent, staring at Elizabeth.* I see light in the sky, Mister; let you counsel with your wife, and may God help you turn your back on Hell. *Proctor is silent, staring at Elizabeth.*
HALE, *quietly:* Excellency, let—
Danforth brushes past Hale and walks out. Hale follows. Cheever stands and follows, Hathorne behind. Herrick goes. Parris, from a safe distance, offers:
PARRIS: If you desire a cup of cider, Mr. Proctor, I am sure I—*Proctor turns an icy stare at him, and he breaks off. Parris raises his palms toward*

Proctor. God lead you now. *Parris goes out.*
Alone. Proctor walks to her, halts. It is as though they stood in a spinning world. It is beyond sorrow, above it. He reaches out his hand as though toward an embodiment not quite real, and as he touches her, a strange soft sound, half laughter, half amazement, comes from his throat. He pats her hand. She covers his hand with hers. And then, weak, he sits. Then she sits, facing him.
PROCTOR: The child?
ELIZABETH: It grows.
PROCTOR: There is no word of the boys?
ELIZABETH: They're well. Rebecca's Samuel keeps them.
PROCTOR: You have not seen them?
ELIZABETH: I have not. *She catches a weakening in herself and downs it.*
PROCTOR: You are a—marvel, Elizabeth.
ELIZABETH : You—have been tortured?
PROCTOR: Aye. *Pause. She will not let herself be drowned in the sea that threatens her.* They come for my life now.
ELIZABETH: I know it.
Pause.
PROCTOR: None—have yet confessed?
ELIZABETH: There be many confessed.
PROCTOR: Who are they?
ELIZABETH: There be a hundred or more, they say. Goody Ballard is one; Isaiah Goodkind is one. There be many.
PROCTOR: Rebecca?
ELIZABETH: Not Rebecca. She is one foot in Heaven now; naught may hurt her more.
PROCTOR: And Giles?
ELIZABETH: You have not heard of it?
PROCTOR: I hear nothin', where I am kept.
ELIZABETH: Giles is dead.
He looks at her incredulously.
PROCTOR: When were he hanged?

ELIZABETH, *quietly, factually:* He were not hanged. He would not answer aye or nay to his indictment; for if he denied the charge they'd hang him surely, and auction out his property. So he stand mute, and died Christian under the law. And so his sons will have his farm. It is the law, for he could not be condemned a wizard without he answer the indictment, aye or nay.
PROCTOR: Then how does he die?
ELIZABETH, *gently:* They press him, John.
PROCTOR: Press?
ELIZABETH: Great stones they lay upon his chest until he plead aye or nay. *With a tender smile for the old man:* They say he give them but two words. "More weight," he says. And died.
PROCTOR, *numbed—a thread to weave into his agony:* "More weight."
ELIZABETH: Aye. It were a fearsome man, Giles Corey.
Pause.
PROCTOR, *with great force of will, but not quite looking at her:* I have been thinking I would confess to them, Elizabeth. *She shows nothing.* What say you? If I give them that?
ELIZABETH: I cannot judge you, John.
Pause.
PROCTOR, *simply-a pure question:* What would you have me do?
ELIZABETH: As you will, I would have it. *Slight pause.* I want you living, John. That's sure.
PROCTOR—*he pauses, then with a flailing of hope:* Giles' wife? Have she confessed?
ELIZABETH: She will not.
Pause.
PROCTOR: It is a pretense, Elizabeth.
ELIZABETH: What is?
PROCTOR: I cannot mount the gibbet like a saint. It is a fraud. I am not that man. *She is silent.* My honesty is broke, Elizabeth; I am no good man. Nothing's spoiled by giving them this lie that were not rotten long before.
ELIZABETH: And yet you've not confessed till now. That speak goodness in you.

PROCTOR: Spite only keeps me silent. It is hard to give a lie to dogs. *Pause, for the first time he turns directly to her.* I would have your forgiveness, Elizabeth.
ELIZABETH: It is not for me to give, John, I am—
PROCTOR : I'd have you see some honesty in it. Let them that never lied die now to keep their souls. It is pretense for me, a vanity that will not blind God nor keep my children out of the wind. *Pause.* What say you?
ELIZABETH, *upon a heaving sob that always threatens:* John, it come to naught that I should forgive you, if you'll not forgive yourself. *Now he turns away a little, in great agony.* It is not my soul, John, it is yours. *He stands, as though in physical pain, slowly rising to his feet with a great immortal longing to find his answer. It is difficult to say, and she is on the verge of tears.*
Only be sure of this, for I know it now: Whatever you will do, it is a good man does it. *He turns his doubting, searching gaze upon her.* I have read my heart this three month, John. *Pause.* I have sins of my own to count. It needs a cold wife to prompt lechery.
PROCTOR, *in great pain:* Enough, enough—
ELIZABETH, *now pouring out her heart:* Better you should know me!
PROCTOR: I will not hear it! I know you!
ELIZABETH: You take my sins upon you, John—
PROCTOR, *in agony:* No, I take my own, my own!
ELIZABETH: John, I counted myself so plain, so poorly made, no honest love could come to me! Suspicion kissed you when I did; I never knew how I should say my love. It were a cold house I kept! *In fright, she swerves, as Hathorne enters.*
HATHORNE: What say you, Proctor? The sun is soon up.
Proctor, his chest heaving, stares, turns to Elizabeth. She comes to him as though to plead, her voice quaking.
ELIZABETH: Do what you will. But let none be your judge. There be no higher judge under Heaven than Proctor is! Forgive me, forgive me, John—I never knew such goodness in the world! *She covers her face, weeping.*
Proctor turns from her to Hathorne; he is off the earth, his voice hollow.

PROCTOR: I want my life.
HATHORNE, *electrified, surprised:* You'll confess yourself?
PROCTOR: I will have my life.
HATHORNE, *with a mystical tone:* God be praised! It is a providence! *He rushes out the door, and his voice is heard calling down the corridor:* He will confess! Proctor will confess!
PROCTOR, *with a cry, as he strides to the door:* Why do you cry it? *In great pain he turns back to her.* It is evil, is it not? It is evil.
ELIZABETH, in *terror, weeping:* I cannot judge you, John, I cannot!
PROCTOR: Then who will judge me? *Suddenly clasping his hands:* God in Heaven, what is John Proctor, what is John Proctor? *He moves as an animal, and a fury is riding in him, a tantalized search.* I think it is honest, I think so; I am no saint.
As though she had denied this he calls angrily at her: Let Rebecca go like a saint; for me it is fraud!
Voices are beard in the hall, speaking together in suppressed excitement.
ELIZABETH: I am not your judge, I cannot be. *As though giving him release:* Do as you will, do as you will!
PROCTOR: Would you give them such a lie? Say it. Would you ever give them this? *She cannot answer.* You would not; if tongs of fire were singeing you you would not! It is evil. Good, then —it is evil, and I do it!
Hathorne enters with Danforth, and, with them, Cheever, Parris, and Hale. It is a businesslike, rapid entrance, as though the ice had been broken.
DANFORTH, *with great relief and gratitude:* Praise to God, man, praise to God; you shall be blessed in Heaven for this. *Cheever has hurried to the bench with pen, ink, and paper. Proctor watches him.* Now then, let us have it. Are you ready, Mr. Cheever?
PROCTOR, *with a cold, cold horror at their efficiency:* Why must it be written?
DANFORTH: Why, for the good instruction of the village, Mister; this we shall post upon the church door! *To Parris, urgently:* Where is the marshal?
PARRIS, *runs to the door and calls down the corridor:* Marshal! Hurry!

DANFORTH: Now, then, Mister, will you speak slowly, and directly to the point, for Mr. Cheever's sake. *He is on record now, and is really dictating to Cheever, who writes.* Mr. Proctor, have you seen the Devil in your life? *Proctor's jaws lock.* Come, man, there is light in the sky; the town waits at the scaffold; I would give out this news. Did you see the Devil?
PROCTOR: I did.
PARRIS: Praise God!
DANFORTH: And when he come to you, what were his demand? *Proctor is silent. Danforth helps.* Did he bid you to do his work upon the earth?
PROCTOR: He did.
DANFORTH: And you bound yourself to his service? *Danforth turns, as Rebecca Nurse enters, with Herrick helping to support her. She is barely able to walk.* Come in, come in, woman!
REBECCA, *brightening as she sees Proctor:* Ah, John! You are well, then, eh?
Proctor turns his face to the wall.
DANFORTH: Courage, man, courage—let her witness your good example that she may come to God herself. Now hear it, Goody Nurse! Say on, Mr. Proctor. Did you bind yourself to the Devil's service?
REBECCA, *astonished:* Why, John!
PROCTOR, *through his teeth, his face turned from Rebecca:* I did.
DANFORTH: Now, woman, you surely see it profit nothin' to keep this conspiracy any further. Will you confess yourself with him?
REBECCA: Oh, John—God send his mercy on you!
DANFORTH: I say, will you confess yourself, Goody Nurse?
REBECCA: Why, it is a lie, it is a lie; how may I damn myself? I cannot, I cannot.
DANFORTH: Mr. Proctor. When the Devil came to you did you see Rebecca Nurse in his company? *Proctor is silent.* Come, man, take courage —did you ever see her with the Devil?
PROCTOR, *almost inaudibly:* No.
Danforth, now sensing trouble, glances at John and goes to the *table, and picks up a sheet—the list of condemned.*

DANFORTH: Did you ever see her sister, Mary Easty, with the Devil?
PROCTOR: No, I did not.
DANFORTH, *his eyes narrow on Proctor:* Did you ever see Martha Corey with the Devil?
PROCTOR: I did not.
DANFORTH, *realizing, slowly putting the sheet down:* Did you ever see anyone with the Devil?
PROCTOR: I did not.
DANFORTH: Proctor, you mistake me. I am not empowered to trade your life for a lie. You have most certainly seen some person with the Devil. *Proctor is silent.* Mr. Proctor, a score of people have already testified they saw this woman with the Devil.
PROCTOR: Then it is proved. Why must I say it?
DANFORTH: Why "must" you say it! Why, you should rejoice to say it if your soul is truly purged of any love for Hell!
PROCTOR: They think to go like saints. I like not to spoil their names.
DANFORTH, *inquiring, incredulous:* Mr. Proctor, do you think they go like saints?
PROCTOR, *evading:* This woman never thought she done the Devil's work.
DANFORTH: Look you, sir. I think you mistake your duty here. It matters nothing what she thought—she is convicted of the unnatural murder of children, .and you for sending your spirit out upon Mary Warren. Your soul alone is the issue here, Mister, and you will prove its whiteness or you cannot live in a Christian country. Will you tell me now what persons conspired with you in the Devil's company? *Proctor is silent.* To your knowledge was Rebecca Nurse ever—
PROCTOR: I speak my own sins; I cannot judge another. *Crying out, with hatred:* I have no tongue for it.
HALE, *quickly to Danforth:* Excellency, it is enough he confess himself. Let him sign it, let him sign it.
PARRIS, *feverishly:* It is a great service, sir. It is a weighty name; it will strike the village that Proctor confess. I beg you, let him sign it. The sun is up, Excellency!

DANFORTH, *considers; then with dissatisfaction:* Come, then, sign your testimony. *To Cheever :* Give it to him. *Cheever goes to Proctor, the confession and a pen in hand. Proctor does not look at it.* Come, man, sign it.
PROCTOR, *after glancing at the confession:* You have all witnessed It—it is enough.
DANFORTH: You will not sign it?
PROCTOR: You have all witnessed it; what more is needed?
DANFORTH: Do you sport with me? You will sign your name or it is no confession, Mister! *His breast heaving with agonized breathing, Proctor now lays the paper down and signs his name.*
PARRIS: Praise be to the Lord!
Proctor has just finished signing when Danforth reaches for the paper. But Proctor snatches it up, and now a wild terror is rising in him, and a boundless anger.
DANFORTH, *perplexed, but politely extending his hand:* If you please, sir.
PROCTOR: No.
DANFORTH, *as though Proctor did not understand:* Mr. Proctor, I must have—
PROCTOR : No, no. I have signed it. You have seen me. It is done! You have no need for this.
PARRIS: Proctor, the village must have proof that—
PROCTOR : Damn the village! I confess to God, and God has seen my name on this! It is enough!
DANFORTH: No, sir, it is—
PROCTOR : You came to save my soul, did you not? Here! I have confessed myself; it is enough!
DANFORTH: You have not con—
PROCTOR: I have confessed myself! Is there no good penitence but it be public? God does not need my name nailed upon the church! God sees my name; God knows how black my sins are! It is enough!
DANFORTH: Mr. Proctor—

PROCTOR: You will not use me! I am no Sarah Good or Tituba, I am John Proctor! You will not use me! It is no part of salvation that you should use me!
DANFORTH: I do not wish to—
PROCTOR: I have three children—how may I teach them to walk like men in the world, and I sold my friends?
DANFORTH: You have not sold your friends—
PROCTOR: Beguile me not! I blacken all of them when this is nailed to the church the very day they hang for silence!
DANFORTH: Mr. Proctor, I must have good and legal proof that you—
PROCTOR: You are the high court, your word is good enough! Tell them I confessed myself; say Proctor broke his knees and wept like a woman; say what you will, but my name cannot—
DANFORTH, *with suspicion:* It is the same, is it not? If I report it or you sign to it?
PROCTOR—*he* knows it is insane: No, it is not the same! What others say and what I sign to is not the same!
DANFORTH: Why? Do you mean to deny this confession when you are free?
PROCTOR: I mean to deny nothing!
DANFORTH: Then explain to me, Mr. Proctor, why you will not let—
PROCTOR, *with a cry of his whole soul:* Because it is my name! Because I cannot have another in my life! Because I lie and sign myself to lies! Because I am not worth the dust on the feet of them that hang! How may I live without my name? I have given you my soul; leave me my name!
DANFORTH, *pointing at the confession in Proctor's hand:* Is that document a lie? If it is a lie I will not accept it! What say you? I will not deal in lies, Mister! *Proctor is motionless.* You will give me your honest confession in my hand, or I cannot keep you from the rope. *Proctor does not reply.* Which way do you go, Mister?
His breast heaving, his eyes staring, Proctor tears the paper and crumples it, and he is weeping in fury, but erect.
DANFORTH: Marshal!

PARRIS, *hysterically, as though the tearing paper were his life:* Proctor, Proctor!
HALE: Man, you will hang! You cannot!
PROCTOR, *his eyes full of tears:* I can. And there's your first marvel, that I can. You have made your magic now, for now I do think I see some shred of goodness in John Proctor. Not enough to weave a banner with, but white enough to keep it from such dogs. *Elizabeth, in a burst of terror, rushes to him and weeps against his hand.* Give them no tear! Tears pleasure them! Show honor now, show a stony heart and sink them with it! *He has lifted her, and kisses her now with great passion.*
REBECCA: Let you fear nothing! Another judgment waits us all!
DANFORTH: Hang them high over the town! Who weeps for these, weeps for corruption! *He sweeps out past them. Herrick starts to lead Rebecca, who almost collapses, but Proctor catches her, and she glances up at him apologetically.*
REBECCA: I've had no breakfast.
HERRICK: Come, man.
Herrick escorts them out, Hathorne and Cheever behind them. Elizabeth stands staring at the empty doorway.
PARRIS, *in deadly fear, to Elizabeth:* Go to him, Goody Proctor! There is yet time!
From outside a drumroll strikes the air. Parris is startled. Elizabeth jerks about toward the window.
PARRIS: Go to him! *He rushes out the door, as though to hold back his fate.* Proctor! Proctor!
Again, a short burst of drums.
HALE: Woman, plead with him! *He starts to rush out the door, and then goes back to her.* Woman! It is pride, it is vanity. *She avoids his eyes, and moves to the window. He drops to his knees.*
Be his helper! What profit him to bleed? Shall the dust praise him? Shall the worms declare his truth? Go to him, take his shame away!
ELIZABETH, *supporting herself against collapse, grips the bars of the window, and with a cry:* He have his goodness now. God forbid I take it

from him!

The final drumroll crashes, then heightens violently. Hale weeps in frantic prayer, and the new sun is pouring in upon her face, and the drums rattle like bones in the morning air.

THE CURTAIN FALLS

ECHOES DOWN THE CORRIDOR

Not long after the fever died, Parris was voted from office, walked out on the highroad, and was never heard of again.

The legend has it that Abigail turned up later as a prostitute in Boston.

Twenty years after the last execution, the government awarded compensation to the victims still living, and to the families of the dead. However, it is evident that some people still were unwilling to admit their total guilt, and also that the factionalism was still alive, for some beneficiaries were actually not victims at all, but informers.

Elizabeth Proctor married again, four years after Proctor's death.

In solemn meeting, the congregation rescinded the excommunications—this in March 1712. But they did so upon orders of the government. The jury, however, wrote a statement praying forgiveness of all who had suffered.

Certain farms which had belonged to the victims were left to ruin, and for more than a century no one would buy them or live on them.

To all intents and purposes, the power of theocracy in Massachusetts was broken.

APPENDIX (Act Two, Scene 2)

Act II, Scene 2, which appeared in the original production, was dropped by the author from the published reading version, the *Collected Plays,* and all Compass editions prior to 1971. It has not been included in most productions subsequent to the revival at New York's Martinique Theatre in 1958 and was dropped by Sir Laurence Olivier in his London production in 1965. It is included here as an appendix.

A wood. Night.

Proctor enters with lantern, glowing behind him, then halts, holding lantern raised. Abigail appears with a wrap over her nightgown, her hair down. A moment of questioning silence.

PROCTOR, *searching*: I must speak with you, Abigail. *She does not move, staring at him.* Will you sit?

ABIGAIL: How do you come?

PROCTOR: Friendly.

ABIGAIL, *glancing about*: I don't like the woods at night. Pray you, stand closer. *He comes closer to her.* I knew it must be you. When I heard the pebbles on the window, before I opened up my eyes I knew. *Sits on log.* I thought you would come a good time sooner.

PROCTOR: I had thought to come many times.

ABIGAIL: Why didn't you? I am so alone in the world now.

PROCTOR, *as a fact, not bitterly*: Are you! I've heard that people ride a hundred mile to see your face these days.

ABIGAIL: Aye, my face. Can you see my face?

PROCTOR, *holds lantern to her face*: Then you're troubled?

ABIGAIL: Have you come to mock me?

PROCTOR, *sets lantern on ground. Sits next to her*: No, no, but I hear only that you go to the tavern every night, and play shovel-board with the Deputy Governor, and they give you cider.

ABIGAIL: I have once or twice played the shovelboard. But I have no joy in it.

PROCTOR: This is a surprise, Abby. I'd thought to find you gayer than this. I'm told a troop of boys go step for step with you wherever you walk these days.

ABIGAIL: Aye, they do. But I have only lewd looks from the boys.

PROCTOR: And you like that not?

ABIGAIL: I cannot bear lewd looks no more, John. My spirit's changed entirely. I ought be given Godly looks when I suffer for them as I do.

PROCTOR: Oh? How do you suffer, Abby?

ABIGAIL, *pulls up dress*: Why, look at my leg. I'm holes all over from their damned needles and pins. *Touching her stomach*: The jab your wife gave me's not healed yet, y'know.

PROCTOR, *seeing her madness now*: Oh, it isn't.

ABIGAIL: I think sometimes she pricks it open again while I sleep.

PROCTOR: Ah?

ABIGAIL: And George Jacobs – *sliding up her sleeve* – he comes again and again and raps me with his stick – the same spot every night all this week. Look at the lump I have.

PROCTOR: Abby – George Jacobs is in the jail all this month.

ABIGAIL: Thank God he is, and bless the day he hangs and lets me sleep in peace again! Oh, John, the world's so full of hypocrites! *Astonished, outraged*: They pray in jail! I'm told they all pray in jail!

PROCTOR: They may not pray?

ABIGAIL: And torture me in my bed while sacred words are comin' from their mouths? Oh, it will need God Himself to cleanse this town properly!

PROCTOR: Abby – you mean to cry out still others?

ABIGAIL: If I live, if I am not murdered, I surely will, until the last hypocrite is dead.

PROCTOR: Then there is no good?

ABIGAIL: Aye, there is one. *You* are good.

PROCTOR: Am I! How am I good?

ABIGAIL: Why, you taught me goodness, therefore you are good. It were a fire you walked me through, and all my ignorance was burned away. It were a fire, John, we lay in fire. And from that night no woman dare call me wicked any more but I knew my answer. I used to weep for my sins when the wind lifted up my skirts; and blushed for shame because some old Rebecca called me loose. And then you burned my ignorance away. As bare as some December tree I saw them all – walking like saints to church, running to feed the sick, and hypocrites in their hearts! And God gave me strength to call them liars, and God made men to listen to me, and by God l will scrub the world clean for the love of Him! Oh, John, I will make you such a wife when the world is white again! *She kisses his hand.* You will be amazed to see me every day, a light of heaven in your house, a – *He rises, backs away amazed.* Why are you cold?

PROCTOR: My wife goes to trial in the morning, Abigail.

ABIGAIL, *distantly*: Your wife?

PROCTOR: Surely you knew of it?

ABIGAIL: I do remember it now. How – how – Is she well?

PROCTOR: As well as she may be, thirty-six days in that place.

ABIGAIL: You said you came friendly.

PROCTOR: She will not be condemned, Abby.

ABIGAIL: You brought me from my bed to speak of her?

PROCTOR: I come to tell you, Abby, what I will do tomorrow in the court. I would not take you by surprise, but give you all good time to think on what to do to save yourself.

ABIGAIL: Save myself!

PROCTOR: If you do not free my wife tomorrow, I am set and bound to ruin you, Abby.

ABIGAIL, *her voice small – astonished*: How – ruin me?

PROCTOR: I have rocky proof in documents that you knew that poppet were none of my wife's; and that you yourself bade Mary Warren stab that needle into it.

ABIGAIL – *A wildness stirs in her, a child is standing here who is unutterably frustrated, denied her wish, but she is still grasping for her wits:* I bade Mary Warren – ?

PROCTOR: You know what you do, you are not so mad!

ABIGAIL: Oh, hypocrites! Have you won him, too? John, why do you let them send you?

PROCTOR: I warn you, Abby!

ABIGAIL: They send you! They steal your honesty and –

PROCTOR: I have found my honesty!

ABIGAIL: No, this is your wife pleading, your sniveling, envious wife! This is Rebecca's voice, Martha Corey's voice. You were no hypocrite!

PROCTOR: I will prove you for the fraud you are!

ABIGAIL: And if they ask you why Abigail would ever do so murderous a deed, what will you tell them?

PROCTOR: I will tell them why.

ABIGAIL: What will you tell? You will confess to fornication? In the court?

PROCTOR: If you will have it so, so I will tell it! *She utters a disbelieving laugh.* I say I will! *She laughs louder, now with more assurance he will never do it. He shakes her roughly.* If you can still hear, hear this! Can you hear! *She is trembling, staring up at him as though he were out of his mind.* You will tell the court you are blind to spirits; you cannot see them any more, and you will never cry witchery again, or I will make you famous for the whore you are!

ABIGAIL, *grabs him*: Never in this world! I know you, John – you are this moment singing secret hallelujahs that your wife will hang!

PROCTOR, *throws her down*: You mad, you murderous bitch!

ABIGAIL: Oh, how hard it is when pretense falls! But it falls, it falls! *She wraps herself up as though to go.* You have done your duty by her. I hope it is your last hypocrisy. I pray you will come again with sweeter news for me. I know you will – now that your duty's done. Good night, John. *She is backing away, raising her hand in farewell.* Fear naught. I will save you tomorrow. *As she turns and goes*: From yourself I will save you. *She is gone. Proctor is left alone, amazed, in terror. Takes up his lantern and slowly exits.*